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Arab-Israeli Talks

PLO-Israeli Talks on Security Conclude in Cairo

Accord Reached on Police Patrols

JN2403165594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1605 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Report by Ziyad Halabi from the "With the Events" feature]

[Text] With regard to the latest developments in the Cairo talks, I would like to say that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations resumed a short while ago.

Prior to the resumption of the negotiations a short while ago, Chief Palestinian Negotiator Dr. Nabil Sha'th said agreement has been reached on the deployment of joint Palestinian-Israeli police patrols in the Hebron area. He said agreement has also been reached on the weapons that will be carried by the international observer force. These weapons, he noted, will be individual weapons to be used for only self-defense.

As we have said, the negotiations have been resumed. This is the only new development I know of. We will announce any further developments once they occur.

Sha'th Hopes for Security Agreement

JN2403194794 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1808 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Brother Nabil Sha'th, head of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks currently under way in Cairo, has hoped that it will be possible to reach an agreement with Israel on security for Palestinians in the occupied territories, particularly in the city of Hebron.

In statements at the end of the first session of talks with Israeli negotiators, which lasted [words indistinct] hours last night, brother Nabil Sha'th said the negotiations are proceeding well, and that they are not encountering any difficulties. He hoped that an agreement will be reached today to allow for the resumption of the talks on the implementation of the Palestinian autonomy agreement.

Joint News Conference Held

NC2403183994 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1720 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 24 Mar (MENA)—Terry Larsen, Norwegian deputy foreign minister and chairman of a conference on providing material aid for the Palestinian police force, has stated that it has been decided to form a committee of representatives from the PLO, Israel, the United States, Egypt, Japan, Russia, Norway, and the European Union to discuss the mechanism for providing aid for the Palestinian police force, which will be formed in accordance with the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles.

Larsen stated this in a joint news conference today attended by Dennis Ross, the U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace talks; Victor Posuvalyuk, President Yeltsin's envoy to the Middle East; Dr. Nabil Sha'th, head of the Palestinian delegation; Uri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry; and Ambassador Husayn Dirar from the Egyptian Foreign Ministry. The committee held its first meeting after the news conference.

Larsen said the Israelis and Palestinians agreed on the entry of the police force to the autonomous regions and that the international community must support this force.

Dennis Ross said the United States will send 200 vehicles for the police force within two weeks.

Sha'th said the World Bank has estimated how much money the police force will need. An initial sum of $47 million is needed for the force. The final cost will be around $90 million annually. He noted that part of this cost can be met in the form of material aid. Some donor states have actually promised to give this aid.

Larsen said the amount to be given by the donor states has not been decided yet. He noted that envoys from the PLO and Norway will visit the donor states to urge them to give aid soon.

At the start of the news conference, Larsen delivered a statement saying that Norway called for this urgent session after consulting with the parties concerned with the peace process to coordinate the aid to be given to establish the Palestinian police force in accordance with the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles and after Israel and the PLO agreed on the early entry of the Palestinian police force to safeguard the safety and security of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Larsen explained that the Israeli and Palestinian sides have affirmed their commitment to the peace process and have discussed the progress made regarding the formation of the police force. The Palestinian side has also discussed the force's needs in terms of equipment, telecommunications, clothes, and housing. The donor states also told the meeting what they can give to the Palestinian police force. He said that during the meeting, emphasis was placed on the quick handing over of missions to the Palestinian police. The PLO explained the need for the right coordination and mechanism in handing over such missions.

Asked about the funds allocated for the Palestinian police force, Larsen said he cannot state the amounts before delegations from Norway and the PLO visit the donor states.

Asked about the date of the deployment of the Palestinian force in Gaza and Jericho, Sha'th said: We are discussing preparations for the deployment of the Palestinian force as soon as possible. He said he hoped deployment would take place on the date specified in the

Declaration of Principles—13 April. He also said he hoped a Palestinian force would be dispatched earlier to prepare for the self-rule authority in Gaza and Jericho.

Sha'th said a Palestinian police force will deploy in Hebron but this will be outside the framework of the Gaza-Jericho talks. Agreement on this police force for Hebron will be reached within the framework of the current talks in Cairo.

Asked about the armament of the Palestinian police force in Hebron, Sha'th said the police will carry personal weapons. He said no agreement has been reached on heavy weapons, such as machine guns. So we ask the donor states to finance what was agreed upon—light weapons, houses for the police force, telecommunications equipment, and transport vehicles. He noted that Norway has delivered 3,000 police uniforms and promised to send another 7,000 uniforms soon.

Uri Savir, director of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, said: During the previous talks on Gaza and Jericho we were very close to reaching an agreement on the arrangements for the police force. We must now reach agreement on the police force outside Gaza and Jericho. He said: We discussed the gradual arrival of the Palestinian police force before the handover of the self-rule authority in Gaza and Jericho.

Larsen declined to answer a question on the absence of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from the meeting.

Asked about the deployment of a Palestinian police force in Hebron, Sha'th said this was the result of the ugly massacre in the al-Ibrahimi Mosque. He noted that negotiations are under way with the Israeli side on the size of this force.

Commenting on the same issue, Savir said: We are still discussing the issue of the police force in Hebron. In the event of an agreement, this force will be a step on the road toward achieving security and stability for the Palestinians. There are some details that are still under discussion.

Asked about his tour of the region, Dennis Ross said his talks with the parties concerned with the peace process were good. The parties affirmed their commitment to establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region. He noted that the meeting in Cairo today indicates that the Israelis want to establish an atmosphere of confidence.

Dennis Ross said: I can say now that April will be the date for resuming the Palestinian-Israeli talks. He noted that he is holding talks with the Russian side on resuming these talks.

On the Russian role in the region, President Yeltsin's envoy said: We have reasons for our increasing interest in the Middle East. The region is our neighbor. We are interested in establishing strong relations with it. We have important economic interests in the region. Many Soviet Jews have emigrated to Israel. He stressed that his country will take steps to strengthen its relations with the Arab states.

The Palestinian and Israeli sides expressed their gratitude to Egypt and Norway for helping them convene this meeting despite the short notice. They also thanked the cosponsors of the conference, the United States and Russia, whose participation on this high level is significant for all the sides.

Accord on Police Force Expected

NC2403215094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2055 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 24 Mar (MENA)—Informed Palestinian sources have said that the current Palestinian-Israeli talks in Cairo to implement the latest Security Council resolution on the protection of the Palestinians in the occupied territories have progressed.

The sources told MENA that the Palestinian-Israeli subcommittee working to draft an agreement on the international presence in Hebron, the Palestinian police force that will deploy in the city, and the armament and jurisdiction of this force has made progress and that the two sides are expected to reach an agreement in the next few hours.

The sources added that the agreement will be tantamount to an "integrated package" that should be accepted or rejected as a whole. The decision on whether to resume the talks on self-rule in Gaza and Jericho will depend on this package.

The Palestinian sources said the agreement the subcommittee is working on drafting will take into consideration the Palestinian demands to move 42 Israeli families living in Hebron city in the Qiryat Arba' settlement outside the city, because their presence in Hebron causes tension.

The agreement also provides for instituting joint patrols of Palestinian and Israeli police in Hebron to maintain security and protect the Palestinians there.

The Palestinian sources believe the latest developments in Hebron city over the past 48 hours assert beyond any doubt the importance of adopting security measures to protect the Palestinian population in the city in light of its unique situation with Islamic holy places there.

The Palestinian sources stated that Israel has agreed to international protection for the Palestinians through international observers armed with light weapons. This is a Norwegian proposal agreed upon by the Palestinian and Israeli sides as a substitute for an Israeli proposal suggesting unarmed international observers from the International Red Cross and United Nations Relief and Works Agency personnel in the occupied territories.

The sources noted that the Israeli Cabinet accepts the Security Council resolution calling for international protection for the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, especially in Hebron city.

Talks End, To Resume 29 Mar

TA2503061194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Progress was made last night in the Cairo talks between Israeli and Palestinian representatives on security arrangements in Hebron. Agreement was reached on the resumption of the Gaza-Jericho talks next Tuesday, and progress was made on most of the issues on the agenda. The Cairo talks ended last night and the Israeli delegation is now on its way home. It will report to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin at noon. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports from our Tel Aviv studio:

A short time ago, an Israeli source very involved in the Cairo talks, told us that a breakthrough or at last progress was made in Egypt, which will permit the resumption of the Gaza-Jericho talks next Tuesday. Progress was made on issues which can be grouped under the term Palestinian security problems, which surfaced due to the Hebron massacre, especially on the establishment and deployment of a Palestinian police force in Hebron. The force will be linked to the Palestinian police force to be set up in Gaza and Jericho whose establishment has already been agreed on. It will be associated in some way with the Hebron Municipality, but will be operationally subordinate to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. That was the main problem under discussion this past week and once it has been resolved, the talks can now focus on the resumption of the Gaza-Jericho talks. The police force will be made up of several dozen Palestinian policemen, which as far as is known, will be armed with revolvers for self-defense. They will conduct joint patrols with the IDF and the foreign observers Israel is prepared to have deployed in Hebron.

The prime minister said yesterday that the talks between Israel and Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan will resume in late April, unrelated to the talks with the PLO. We can therefore state that the peace talks are making a great stride forward along all tracks.

Israeli Delegation Leaves Cairo

NC2503083794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0708 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 25 Mar (MENA)—An Israeli delegation led by Deputy Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq left Cairo this morning, having taken part in the negotiations aiming to implement UN Security Council Resolution 904 concerning the massacre in al-Ibrahimi Mosque.

The delegation held two days of talks in Cairo with a Palestinian delegation led by Dr. Nabil Sha'th, political adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, on ways of implementing Resolution 904, particularly with regard to providing international protection to the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

A small Palestinian-Israeli drafting committee held a long session last night to formulate a comprehensive agreement on international protection arrangements in Hebron and the Palestinian police force in the city.

An agreement between the two sides would open the way to resuming Palestinian-Israeli negotiations aimed at implementing the Gaza-Jericho First Agreement. The negotiations were discontinued on 25 February following the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre.

Sha'th Says Progress Achieved

NC2503092494 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, the head of the Palestinian negotiating team, has said that progress was achieved in the talks but added that some issues remain unresolved. Speaking to journalists following a session of talks that ended early this morning in Cairo, Sha'th said the talks would resume on Tuesday [29 Mar] following consultations by the two delegations in Tunisia and Israel.

General Amnon Shahaq, who heads the Israeli delegation to the talks, speaking following a 14-hour session of talks, said a joint document was formulated but there are still several points of disagreement.

PLO sources last night said that Israel agreed in principle to a limited presence of international observers and the operation of joint Palestinian-Israeli patrols in Hebron.

[In a related report, Cairo MENA in Arabic at 0755 GMT on 25 March cites Dr. Sha'th as saying: "Considerable progress took place in the negotiations with the Israelis over the past two days in Cairo but there are still some points that need to be worked out."

[The same MENA report adds: "Sources close to the negotiations say that Israel has agreed to the deployment of 100 Norwegian observers armed with light weapons in Hebron."]

Russian Envoy Comments on Role in Peace Process

TA2403171494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1305 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Viktor Posuvalyuk, the special Russian envoy who is currently in Cairo, told Qol Yisra'el that the Egyptians view Russia's new spate of activity with great enthusiasm and have emphasized Russia's role as an international superpower. Our correspondent Izabella Ginor, who interviewed Posuvalyuk from our studio, asked him about the results of his many meetings with 'Arafat.

The Russian envoy said he conveyed to 'Arafat a letter from Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev which underscored the need to pursue the talks and meet the commitment which the peace process imposes on us. At the same time the letter underlined Russia's commitment as a permanent member of the Security Council and a superpower.

Posuvalyuk went on to say that as a superpower, Russia will do everything within its power to implement the Security Council resolution. This is what he spoke about with 'Arafat, as well as about concrete issues such as 'Arafat's upcoming visit to Moscow on 19 April.

Ginor asked Posuvalyuk whether after five meetings with 'Arafat in Tunis, and as a special Russian envoy to the Middle East, he intends to visit Jerusalem as well. The Russian said that five days ago he met Israel's ambassador to Moscow and later Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir in Tunis. Posuvalyuk told his Israeli interlocutors in no uncertain terms that he wants to come to Israel soon in order to hold in-depth talks about bilateral relations and Russia's intended role in the Middle East. Posuvalyuk said he received favorable reactions to his request and the only question remains that of timing, seeing that Israel is on the eve of a holiday. He stated, however, that he would like to come to Israel as soon as possible.

The Russian envoy stressed Russia's expected role in the area. He said Russia wants to play a quiet, constructive, and creative role. Asked by Ginor whether his many meetings with 'Arafat do not indicate that Russia is coordinating its moves with the PLO, Posuvalyuk was actually offended, saying it was a rude question. He said that the PLO was an independent party to the peace process and that Russia is one of the cosponsors of the process. It is not a matter of coordination, rather of reciprocal relations and a certain overlapping of aims and practical missions.

Ginor asked Posuvalyuk if he solved with 'Arafat the issue of the international presence, which caused so many difficulties on the path to resuming the talks. The Russian answered that the issue was in principle dealt with in the Security Council resolution and is now being discussed by all the sides. We will have to find the optimal formula from among the many ideas introduced. Posuvalyuk said in his opinion a compromise will be found in the form of some kind of international observers. The special Russian envoy believes these will be UN observers with a finely-nuanced status and political equipment—and other equipment as well. Posuvalyuk emphasized that Russia is in principle very interested in participating in this international presence, whatever form it finally takes.

We asked the Russian envoy about the possibility of a meeting between Yasir 'Arafat and Yitzhaq Rabin—who is scheduled to visit Moscow several days after 'Arafat. Posuvalyuk claimed that so far there is no such meeting on the agenda. Hypothetically, however, a summit between Rabin and 'Arafat—in Moscow or elsewhere—could directly contribute to the success of the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs

Official: Demands To Be Met Before Talks Resume

NC2503104894 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with Nabil Qassis, head of the Palestinian experts' teams in the Palestinian Advisory Group to the Arab-Israeli talks, in Jerusalem, with Fayiz al-Miliji in Cairo, date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Al-Miliji] Good morning Mr. Nabil and welcome to Voice of the Arabs.

[Qassis] Good morning.

[Al-Miliji] The pressing question now is: Will the PLO resume the negotiations with Israel before the resolution providing for international protection in the occupied Arab territories is implemented?

[Qassis] The Palestinian side has posed certain conditions for the resumption of talks. They are more than just the so-called international protection mentioned in the recent resolution. There are other things that relate to the Israeli practices at the hands of the occupation troops and the settlers, as well as the presence of settlements in densely populated areas. All these things need to be tackled before negotiations can resume in a meaningful way.

[Al-Miliji] But efforts are now under way to bring the PLO back to the negotiating table. How far have these efforts gone?

[Qassis] According to the information I have, indeed efforts are under way, but the Palestinian man in the street wants to see compliance with the Palestinian requirements before talks resume. Negotiations for the sake of negotiations is not a Palestinian demand. We want negotiations that can lead to positive results in terms of resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and recognizing the rights of the Palestinian people. There were problems at the talks even before the Hebron massacre, and the massacre has exacerbated things further and there is now more determination than ever regarding the need to tackle the settlement issue properly.

[Al-Miliji] But a delay by the PLO in resuming the talks could waste what the PLO has gained from its talks with Israel.

[Qassis] What has been gained so far from talks with Israel is such that if we were to lose it, it would not really amount to much. [passage omitted]

[Al-Miliji] How did the Palestinian masses receive the recent Security Council resolution on the Hebron massacre?

[Qassis] With indifference. This is because the resolution did not tackle the core of the problem.

[Al-Miliji] But it called for protection for the Palestinian people?

[Qassis] This is not the first time the Security Council has passed a resolution. What counts in the end is getting significant protection, not monitoring. We do not want somebody to monitor and write reports, we want people to prevent the recurrence of such a massacre. This is what is needed. If the implementation of the resolution meets this requirement, the Palestinian people will receive it positively. But the people cannot be enthusiastic about just the text of a resolution; we want the resolution to be implemented in a meaningful way. [passage omitted]

[Al-Miliji] There are reports about renewed clashes in Hebron; could you tell us about them?

[Qassis] For more than 24 hours, the occupation troops besieged a densely populated Palestinian area and it was bombarded.

[Al-Miliji] What for?

[Qassis] Of course we are not in Hebron and do not know if what the Israeli radio and press are saying is true or not. However, homes were shelled with military weapons, such antitank weapons, and I believe four young Palestinian men were killed. In the meantime, the occupation troops broke into hospitals and terrified children and old people. A pregnant woman was martyred. Such Israeli practices leave no room for optimism regarding the ongoing talks.

[Al-Miliji] Finally, has the Security Council resolution met your aspirations?

[Qassis] The answer is no.

[Al-Miliji] The PLO is between a rock and a hard place: either to resume the talks, which may anger the Palestinians in the territories, or not to resume the talks and thus delay the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. What about that?

[Qassis] The PLO is the leadership of and part of the Palestinian people. The PLO does not handle the situation from the standpoint of pressure from the Palestinian public, because the PLO represents the Palestinian man in the street. It adopts positions that suit the Palestinian interests. There is real doubt about the worthiness of a peace process that does not tackle the settlements problem. The Palestinian masses' position on this issue does not differ from the PLO's. This is a Palestinian position being expressed by the PLO, which represents the Palestinian people.

[Al-Miliji] So could we say that the Palestinian decision is not to resume the talks before the necessary protection is secured for the Palestinians inside the territories?

[Qassis] This is up to the PLO leadership in Tunis to announce. I am just telling you what the situation is as we see it here among the Palestinian masses. We have requirements, and we take these requirements seriously. They are not made just to score points. It has been said that peace and the settlements cannot exist side by side, and this has been proved to be correct. We always said that, and now we see it clearly right in front of us.

[Al-Miliji] Thank you Mr. Nabil Qassis.

[Qassis] You are welcome.

Four Senior Hamas 'Terrorists' Killed in Hebron

TA2303191294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Four terrorists were killed during a lengthy battle with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in Hebron. Five soldiers were slightly wounded. The terrorists killed were among the most prominent Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members in Hebron.

Holding Company Launched To Invest in Territories

JN2403130794 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 24 May 94 pap 1, 5

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Maryam M. Shahin]

[Text] Amman—A group of prominent businessmen on Wednesday [23 March] officially launched a $200 million holding company to invest in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Kamal al-Sha'ir, a Jordanian businessman, was elected chairman of the company's 16-member board of directors.

The Palestine Development and Investment Incorporated (PDII) is the first major Arab-led commercial enterprise to be launched since the Sept. 13 signing of the autonomy accord between Israel and the PLO.

"This is a historic day for the economic and developmental future of the occupied territories," said Ahmad Quray', head of the Economic Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), addressing the audience at a ceremony launching PDII at the Amman Chamber of Industry.

The ceremony, followed by the election of the board of directors, was attended by many of the 141 investors who constitute the financial backbone of much of the Palestinian community in the diaspora. They include Arab Bank Chairman 'Abd-al-Hamid Shuman, Hasib al-Sabbagh, Sa'id Khuri, Munib al-Masri, Ramzi Dallul, and 'Abd-al-Muhsin Qattan.

Several leaders of the Jordanian business community such as Khalil al-Talhuni, Kamal al-Sha'ir, and Khaldun

Abu-Hassan and Jordanian banks such as the Cairo Amman Bank and the Housing Bank are also founding members of the PDII.

The opening was attended by Minister of Information Jawad al-'Anani and Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim as well as Jerusalem-based Palestinian leader and leading peace negotiator Faysal al-Husayni.

"We, in the occupied territories, welcome the venture with open arms," Mr. Husayni told the press. He stressed that in view of the economic difficulties and restraints faced by the people in the occupied territories, "all help is welcome."

Mr. Quray', one of the Palestinian architects behind the Oslo peace accord, said: "Our information indicates that at least 50 per cent of the people in the occupied territories are unemployed; investment in housing and industries will change that."

"We have estimated that we need to build 185,000 housing units in the occupied territories," he added.

The founding members, who have thus far contributed just over half of the capital, or $100 million, say they hope to raise another $100 million.

"In another six to eight months the number of founding investors could reach up to 300 or more and the capital investment would grow to $200 million," said company spokesman Raja'i al-Masri.

"This is the first major initiative of its kind by the Palestinian private sector in the economic development of the occupied territories," said Mr. Quray'.

The company was registered in Liberia as an off-shore share-holding firm in October 1993, and it will retain that status until the political and economic situation in the occupied territories becomes "more settled," Mr. al-Masri said.

It was also announced at Wednesday's meeting that the PDII was a 49 per cent share-holder in the West Bank-based al-Ruwad Investment Group, which is a West Bank-registered share-holding company with an initial capital of $50 million.

Al-Ruwad will act as PDII's largest subsidiary in the occupied territories, said Kamal Hassuni, a West Bank investor in PDII and director of Al-Ruwad.

"West Bank and Gaza investors have 51 per cent of the shares and our first priority is to build badly needed housing units," Mr. Hassuni said.

PDII will initially concentrate on housing, industry, light industry and the tourism.

The ownership composition is in accordance with Jordanian laws implemented before the 1967 Israeli seizure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. "Local residents must have the majority of the shares," said Raja Shihadah, a prominent Ramallah-based lawyer, who also addressed the audience and briefed investors on the legal aspects of investment in the occupied territories.

Company shares will be made available to the public once PDII is listed at a stock market. "We don't expect that a Palestinian stock market will develop in the very near future but the PDII stocks will undoubtedly be listed in the stock markets of Arab capitals such as Amman, Beirut and Bahrain," said one of the founders of the company.

The members of the board are: The Arab Bank Ltd, the Cairo-Amman Bank (Yazid Mufti), Said Co., al-Masirah Co., Nabil al-Shawwa, Ramzi Dallul, 'Azmi 'Abd-al-Hadi, Nidal Sukhtyan, Riad Sadiq, Husayn Sharqawi, Zuhdi Khury and the Housing Bank.

PLO Leadership Urged To Abandon 'Oslo Road'

TA2403172594 Jerusalem AL-TALI'AH in Arabic 24 Mar 94 p 3

[Commentary by editor in chief Bashir al-Barghuthi: "The Road to Oslo Is No Longer Passable"]

[Excerpts] Without having to go as far back as the Madrid days, after the Oslo and Cairo agreements we now have a great deal of painful evidence that the negotiations "mechanism" which the United States assured us would lead to a just solution has only yielded more retreats politically and on the ground, to the disadvantage of the Palestinian side, in the conflict's equation.

Suffice it that we point to the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and the subsequent decision to set up a new settlement neighborhood in holy Jerusalem, then to the United States' abstention from the Security Council vote on the status of Jerusalem, and to what is happening now in Hebron—from the destruction of buildings by rockets to the endless falling of martyrs by official bullets!

Undoubtedly, the decisionmakers in the Palestinian negotiating side have heard about all these things, but that did not prevent them from agreeing to resume the talks and accepting to play the game of "technical" details, without drawing the appropriate conclusions about the meaning of the continuing Hebron massacre and about the U.S. position on Security Council Resolution 904. [passage omitted]

Amid this amazing urge to negotiate, without taking into account the bloody developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and without paying attention to the calls by the majority of the territories' residents to stop the talks until the conditions for the Palestinian people's protection are met, the PLO's leadership crisis is intensifying. Half of the Executive Committee members did not attend its recent meetings. The half that did attend were not harmonious. Negotiating decisions are adopted even before those members are informed about them.

The Israeli and U.S. sides are aware of this fact. They are also aware that among the nine members attending the current Executive Committee meetings, three did not agree to the Oslo accord. In addition, other members are opposed to the way in which decisions—if they are decisions—are being adopted by the Executive Committee.

This situation must not continue. It undermines the PLO's status as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative and has a negative effect on its credibility as a negotiator on behalf of these people as well as on its negotiating power.

Once again we call on all those concerned about the PLO's status and credibility to meet and consult in a bid to assess the situation and agree on measures that at least ensure the minimal national unity.

The Oslo road is no longer passable. It is full of settlements and calamities that have befallen our people through the long lists of martyrs, confiscations of land, and daily violations. It is no longer possible to jump over what has accumulated on the Oslo road. If anyone is thinking of doing so, it will be a dangerous jump and his fall will be so hard that we would not wish it on any of our people.

Algeria

Decision on Lemari Signing as Defense Minister Noted

PM2403111894 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 23 Mar 94 pp 1, 4

[Reports by Qusayy Salih al-Darwish in Paris and Muhammad Sadiq in Washington: "Zeroual Authorizes Lemari To Sign as Defense Minister"]

[Excerpt] As President Liamine Zeroual continued his dialogue contacts, the attention of the political circles focused on a presidential decision published in the official gazette in which President Zeroual authorized Chief of Staff Major General Mohamed Lemari to sign for him as defense minister. Some observers see that as being tantamount to an appointment of Maj. Gen. Lemari as second defense minister. The matter seems to have caused sharp arguments at the military command's meetings last Wednesday and Thursday. Although Maj. Gen. Lemari rejected the post of defense minister when Zeroual became president and also objected to anyone else assuming that post, as a result of which President Zeroual himself assumed the post, giving the chief of staff this authorization now means that those opposed to President Zeroual's move toward political dialogue have scored an important point, particularly as it coincided with the partial acceptance of Maj. Gen. Lemari's call for a change of military district commanders. AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that 5th Military District Commander Major General Abdelhamid Jouadi, First Military District (the capital) Commander Major General Jnouhat, and Land Army Command Major General Khalifah Rahim have been relieved of their posts. The names of the officers who will replace them have not been revealed yet but they may well be supporters of Maj. Gen. Lemari and the hard-line trend in the Army.

Meanwhile, the military forces are launching attacks on the areas where fundamentalist gunmen are active. According to some sources, these attacks have resulted in a large number of victims described by the security authorities and the media as "terrorists." Maj. Gen. Lemari and the hard-line trend appear to be banking on achieving tangible results in the field of security that would provide the answer to those who claim that the regime has no option other than dialogue following the failure of the security option.

In the capital, Algiers, yesterday there was a gathering of secular forces opposed to political dialogue with the Islamic Salvation Front. Some 30,000 people, mostly women, attended. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Musa Returns From Conflict Resolution Meeting

NC2503080294 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa returned to Cairo from Addis Ababa early today. His Excellency said that current African disputes, notably the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria, as well as the situation in Burundi and the developments in Somalia were discussed at a meeting of the Central Organ for Conflict Resolution [COCR] in Addis Ababa.

Minister Musa said that the COCR issued a final statement expressing appreciation for President Husni Mubarak's efforts to resolve the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon and the Somali crisis. The Egyptian foreign minister said that Egypt will contribute $100,000 in assistance to the COCR.

Minister Musa said that Egypt welcomes the agreement signed yesterday among Somali parties and sees it as a significant step toward resolving the Somali crisis. Musa said that the Somalis are now faced with the task of electing a new president and vice presidents and forming a government, judiciary, legislative council, and local councils.

The Somali parties have made a significant achievement because their agreement outlines the country's path to reconciliation. Many Somalis have noted that the talks held in Cairo were instrumental in arriving at this agreement, Musa said. The foreign minister will present a full report to President Mubarak today about the COCR meeting in Addis Ababa.

Arms Cache Uncovered at 'Terrorist' Hideout

NC2503100494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2330 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Cairo, 24 Mar (MENA)—A responsible security source at the Ministry of Interior today said that security men had uncovered an "arsenal" containing large quantities of explosives and bombs inside a den belonging to a terrorist in the 'Ayn Shams Buildings' area in Cairo. The terrorist is wanted for involvement in recent terrorist crimes, particularly attacks against banks in greater Cairo.

The source pointed out that when the den was stormed, the terrorist was not found there, but sketches indicating the locations of some important installations, banks, and targeted individuals in Cairo and al-Jizah were found, in preparation for carrying out a plan.

The same source added that the State Security Intelligence Department had received information that terrorist Mustafa Muhammad Ibrahim Siddiq, better known as Zaghlul, was taking refuge at a hideout in the 'Ayn Shams Buildings. Investigations revealed he was involved in the recent bank bombings. Inside the hideout, security men found parts of RPG launchers, two homemade guns, a quantity of highly explosive TNT, and a roll of fuse used in bombings. A camera, a number of cans used for making explosive devices, and some "organizational" documents containing the names of some important figures and targeted senior police officials were also found in the den.

Editorial Criticizes Clinton's Jerusalem Remark

NC2403132994 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 17 Mar 94 pp 1, 3

[Editorial by Chief Editor Mahfuz al-Ansari: "Clinton and Jerusalem; Miscalculation and Conditional Peace"]

[Text] We may understand the dilemma of U.S. President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary. We may even sympathize with this young couple who rule the White House and wield the helm of world events, or so we think. We understand the nervous pressure and frayed confidence of the strongest man in the world when his job is placed on the line and his position is jeopardized by a scandal that threatens to drown him in Whitewater, a scandal reminiscent of President Nixon's Watergate.

We may also sense the influence and see the fingerprints of some U.S. officials who are concerned with the Middle East crisis on Washington's tendencies, policies, statements, and, of course, decisions. Among these officials are Dennis Ross, the chief coordinator; Daniel Kurtzer, deputy assistant secretary of state; Martin Indyk, National Security Council and White House official; and Aaron Miller, Ross's assistant.

But there are things that we fail to understand, comprehend, or even imagine and, therefore, find unacceptable and objectionable.

For example:

—We fail to understand why President Clinton should try to emerge from his dilemma at the expense of the truth, why he should make an offer for which someone else would foot the bill, and why he should present Jerusalem as a sacrifice at the alter to please certain people, hoping that they may then back him and make the Whitewater affair disappear before it ends his career as Watergate ended Nixon's.

—We find it unacceptable and objectionable that the judge, partner, and mediator should hand down his final verdict in the case before the defense has ended its presentation, before the case is summed up, before the contestants are brought into court, and before the rivals face each other at the negotiating table.

—We object to Clinton's issuing a unilateral decision that undermines the international order, violates the legitimacy of its resolution, and slaps the members of the international community in the face.

—We find it incomprehensible and bewildering that President Clinton should break with his country's tradition and turn his back on its known positions for the past 27 years. That is, from June 1967 until Clinton declared unified Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

For 27 years, for more than a quarter of a century—President Johnson, who instigated, planned, funded, armed, and orchestrated the 1967 aggression, could not declare or state that Jerusalem was Israel's capital; and Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush stopped short of what Clinton, all of a sudden and with bizarre timing, did.

On the contrary, for a quarter century resolutions were issued, statements were declared, and positions were stated by successive U.S. Administrations, the UN General Assembly, and the UN Security Council, all of which emphasized that East Jerusalem is part of the Arab territories occupied in 1967.

An element of flexibility had been advocated by James Baker, the former U.S. secretary of state, who maintained that the peace process should begin by addressing the easy issues. This, he reasoned, should lead to progress and generate momentum that could be useful in addressing the difficult and intricate issues at a later stage. The idea, then, was not to make concessions and compromises for their own sake, but to expand the areas of agreement through discussion of less thorny matters. That is, once a climate of understanding and a spirit of mutual confidence had been created, difficult matters would be brought to the table.

President Clinton's declaration, although made during a private meeting with U.S. Jewish leaders, does not show the astuteness of a "professional" statesman as much as it betrays the opinion of an "amateur politician". There's a big difference between amateurism and professionalism.

Amateurism is a whim, a personal inclination motivated by bias and fed by emotions. Professionalism is a job, work, and responsibility.

Professionalism means calculations, assessments, and rules. It has principles and codes of conduct. Anyone who disregards them breaks the rules. If he circumvents them, he violates the law. If he breaks the rules and transgresses, he is taken to account.

Governing—particularly on a very high level, on a state level, indeed on a universal level, as the case is with the U.S. President—must signify justice and responsibility. It must never be an attention grabbing "arbitrary move" that shifts the focus from Whitewater to Jerusalem, or from the Hebron massacre to an assault on a Lebanese church or a monastery in al-Qusiyah, Egypt.

Governing should signify decisions and statements that have been thoroughly thought out, sober conduct, and a word of reason at this difficult, embarrassing time.

During a recent meeting with Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat]—at a time when his chief negotiator Nabil Sha'th had just returned from Washington following lengthy meetings with Christopher and his aides—Abu-'Ammar disclosed part of the news Sha'th had brought to him from the U.S. capital. Among the things he revealed were some of the reasons for the obstruction of a UN Security Council resolution on the Hebron massacre. The most important of these reasons was a "firm, stern, and emphatic U.S. refusal to allow any direct or indirect reference to Jerusalem." There was a U.S. commitment

to "banning the word Jerusalem from the draft of the resolution and subsequently from the resolution itself."

Everyone was perplexed by this strange attitude and this intransigence and insistence because the draft resolution included nothing new about Jerusalem. It added nothing new, made no new request, and did not emphasize a principle that some people were trying to obliterate.

All that the Palestinians asked for was that the draft and the final wording of the resolution should include a passing reference to Security Council Resolution 799 of 1992. It was meant to be a reference to that resolution in the wake of the Hebron massacre. Resolution 799 speaks of implementing the fourth Geneva Convention pertaining to territories and residents living under occupation, including occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza, including Jerusalem.

This reference to a binding UN resolution and a firm international principle—a resolution and principle accepted by the United States when the vote on Resolution 799 was taken in 1992—was now unacceptable, prohibited, and a taboo.

No one knew at that point the reason for the prohibition of something which had, in fact, been accepted and agreed upon as a matter of course.

It was to be a Palestinian reference, a necessary one after the Hebron massacre proved that Palestinians under occupation enjoy no form of protection whatsoever.

People became apprehensive at this point and the Palestinians realized something "was being cooked up" in the dark. The perplexity and fear persisted until President Clinton revealed his intentions and "detonated his bombshell" in the dark. Israel Radio then lifted the veil and "laid it bare".

This attitude to the resolution and its draft form, to which the U.S. negotiators adhered throughout the Security Council's deliberations, was based on frank, definite, and clear instructions from the White House. It does not reflect the U.S. Administration's calculations. It rather shows "a deception." It reflects a circumvention and contradiction of former positions and commitments. It shows an abandonment of the responsibility the United States bears as a full partner in the peace process.

This position reflects a bias, indeed a U.S.-Israeli alliance, against the Arabs.

Perhaps this maneuver or change in the U.S. position would have been acceptable before Oslo and before the signing ceremony at the White House. Perhaps this position could have been the subject of discussion, argument, and negotiations before the Hebron massacre. But after the signing ceremony at the White House and the festival of martyrdom in the al-Ibrahimi Mosque, it is impermissible for the United States—irrespective of the personal reasons of President Clinton and his wife Hillary—to adopt such a stand, unless the game is much bigger than this, the deception hides behind it a greater tragedy, and the peace process for which we are sincerely working is a big lie.

I am afraid that President Clinton's calculations and assessment of the overall situation were the result of political amateurism and not responsible professionalism, which is necessary for one who occupies this high position at the center of the empire that runs the affairs of the entire world.

This political amateurism may have been nurtured or attracted by an easy or naive calculation based on the facts and developments at that moment. This naive and tempting calculation may have been based on dealing with the situation in light of the material relations between the forces. These material relations say that Israel is now the strongest country as a result of its alliance with the United States, its military arsenal, nuclear bombs, and internal cohesion, despite the internal struggle for leadership and power.

The material relations also say that the Arabs are now at the peak of their division and weakness. They also say that this weakness and disintegration have led many Arab states to run after Israel, seeking science, knowledge, experience, money, gain, and good administration. Many of the Arabs have rushed to compete for the Israeli treasures.

This is the general picture of the relations and balance between the forces in the area. There are those who seek progress, wealth, and knowledge from Israel and those who have placed security in the back or front of their minds as their main concern and have imagined that a military alliance with Israel in the near or distant future will spare them from the evil of troublemakers among their Arab brothers who covet their territory and wealth. They also imagined that this will spare them from the evil of the troublemakers among the Muslim brothers in the neighboring countries who are seeking to restore past glories by establishing a Muslim empire that transcends borders. This, as we said, is the material calculation, the calculation based on the relations and balance between the forces. This is a misleading calculation as much as it is tempting. Furthermore, there is a difference between weakness resulting from a defect in relations between the forces and capitulation, which is out of the question.

Therefore, the reality is very different and the reasons for that are many. For the foreseeable future at least, military superiority has become ineffective. Nuclear and military potentials have, to a large extent, become inoperative and useless. We have the example of the second superpower, which broke down and collapsed on itself while possessing the largest weapons arsenal of all kinds. It also had the largest supply of resources, expertise, and scientists on the face of the earth.

We have the second example in South Africa, which was founded as a racial state in the same year as racial Israel was founded, 1948. Both of them came to be part of the post-World War II arrangements.

The whites established their racial state there and deprived around 30 million people, that is the black Africans and sons of the area, of their land. The whites armed themselves with everything and deprived the others of everything. They armed themselves with education, monopolized work including agriculture, built an atomic bomb, set up a military arsenal, and at the end of the road, discovered that the world had changed.

They found out that arrangements made after World War II had collapsed and were being replaced by post-Cold War arrangements.

They discovered that they were up against the wall and had no other option but coexistence, dismantling the racial state, and building a democratic state. They discovered that bullets were blank and grenades had no triggers.

They changed and decided to bravely join the rest of the world, led wisely, expertly, and with good intentions by de Klerk. They made way for free elections for all—for the blacks, the whites, and the coloreds—elections that will take place on 27 April.

They decided to go ahead despite the fact that they know the results beforehand—the black majority will win. However, they did not withdraw, as Rabin is doing today.

The noticeable fact is that the two racial states, Israel and South Africa, were founded in 1948.

Also, in both cases peace negotiations based on change started in 1992.

The difference is the regression, through massacres, in Palestine and the progress, despite problems, in South Africa.

The second fact in the unseen, intangible, and invisible formula is that when Israel accepts or shows readiness to accept a part of the land under a just peace, it should do so on the condition that the Palestinians regain their rights and land, topped by Jerusalem.

This condition is binding, not only to Israel, but even to those who have competed to sign secret agreements with Israel, be they security or cooperation agreements.

The region and its people have accepted peace as a condition for cooperation—a just, fair, and equitable peace.

Anything less than this is rejected and unimplementable; no one can impose it on them.

Therefore, the real calculations of the superpowers do not rely on material and military relations. In actual fact, they rely on general popular acceptance by all the countries and peoples in the region. This is the effective and decisive factor. Anything less than this, is a fancy flitting through the minds of amateurs.

Libya

Remarks by UK Official on Weapons Refuted

LD2403125394 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] The London-based JEWISH CHRONICLE said in the latest edition, last Friday, that British Defense Secretary Malcom Rifkind told Jewish deputies in Glasgow that the European continent faces threats from some Arab states. He said that Libya possesses rockets capable of hitting targets in southern France, Italy, and Spain. JANA's international affairs editor commented on this statement. He said:

This is the second statement of its kind made by the British defense secretary in less than a month. This confirms that the statements of the British officials constitute part of a psychological terrorist campaign that has been continuously waged by western colonialist circles against the Libyan people and its revolution. This campaign aims at distorting the image of the Great Jamahiriyah before international public opinion, in an attempt to prepare it to accept any irresponsible action that could be taken or carried out against the Jamahiriyah.

This reminds us of the huge campaign of lies and distortion that preceded the aggression against Libya half-way through the month of al-Tayr in 1986. These allegations launched by some western officials against the Great Jamahiriyah could only be considered real official terrorism which is inseparable from the unfair sanctions imposed on Libya in the name of the Security Council by Western countries which dominate this council.

The Great Jamahiriyah has repeatedly stressed that it does not have the capacity to own those destructive weapons, and that it has never been interested in them or thought of possessing them because it was mainly busy building its economy and achieving self-sufficiency in food and water and implementing its development plans despite those unjust coercive measures that seek to obstruct that and deprive Libyans from building development on their land.

History shows that we have never threatened or attacked the Europeans in their lands because we consider them human beings and respect them. As for those who make such statements, history witnesses that it is they whose relations with us have always been those of invasion, colonization, and ongoing attempts to dominate us and control our destiny.

Opposition Head: Army Ranks Remain 'Open to All'

PM2403115094 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 24 Mar 94 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Haftar: Our Army Open to All Libyans"]

[Text] London, AL-HAYAH—Staff Colonel Khalifah Abu-al-Qasim Haftar, commander of the opposition "Libyan National Army," has announced that the army "is a partner in the efforts to establish the Libyan Movement for Change and Reform, of which it is an original part. It advocates the movements' aims and complies with its struggle and political programs. However, its ranks will remain open to all the sons of our people, regardless of their political affiliations."

This came in a statement issued yesterday by Haftar. It includes an affirmation that the opposition army is "an integral part of our national Armed Forces inside the country, and it considers itself a vanguard force for all honorable oppositionists, regardless of their political affiliations.... It is an army for all Libyans in order to achieve the aims of national struggle."

The statement adds: "The Libyan National Army, which has decided to split from the National Front for the Salvation of Libya to look for a new struggle formula through which to carry out its national tasks, considers itself a partner in the establishment of the Libyan Movement for Change and Reform..., but its ranks will remain open to all the sons of our heroic people who are prepared to offer their lives and contribute on the field for the sake of their country's cause, regardless of their political affiliations and as long as they are committed to the basic aims of national struggle and the army's laws, rules, and practical programs."

It also stresses the army's commitment to "the national character of the battle" against the Libyan regime, and its "belief that this battle should rely entirely on national material and human energies and capabilities inside and outside the country and through a comprehensive plan in which all efforts and capabilities should be united for the sake of serving and achieving the major strategic aims of our heroic people's struggle."

The statement also stresses "commitment to the constitutional legitimacy represented in the affirmation of the noble people's right to be in charge of decisionmaking with regard to all that concerns the system of government and to choose their own institutions." The army's implementation of "its practical struggle program will be parallel with the political struggle espoused by the Libyan Movement for Change and Reform, aimed at achieving legitimate national demands through the programs of political and military action."

It then appeals to "all the sincere sons of the homeland who are seeking salvation and freedom...to take a strong, courageous, and unified stand and rise up to close ranks, unite their efforts, and channel their energies and capabilities to achieve the strategic national aims represented in our people's aspiration to a life of pride, dignity, freedom, and democracy."

The statement welcomes "the joining of the army by the honorable brothers Staff Brigadier General Salim al-Hajjaji, Major Ahmad al-Fituri, and Captain Anwar Abu-Ghaliyah, who have joined the army," hoping that their position will be "a blessed start for this new phase in the march of Libyan national struggle."

Western Countries Effect on UN Analyzed

LD2403172194 Tripoli JANA in English 1618 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Tripoli. al-Rabia'a [March] 24 (JAMAHIRIYA NEWS AGENCY)—In a proposal presented to the United Nations, the United States called for Japan and Germany to be permanent members of the Security Council.

The Cable News Network, CNN, said that the American ambassador to the United Nations presented this in the form of a proposal.

The international affairs editor commented saying: At a time when we have been saying that the time has long become overdue for a review and reorganising of the United Nations on a new basis where all nations would have an equal role in it and would serve to extract it from the quagmire it has fallen into as a result of the hegemony of the Western countries over it. These Western countries transformed the United Nations into an instrument to repress other nations.

Thus, by changing the United Nations along these lines, as proposed repeatedly by the leader of the revolution, is a matter which concerns all those countries represented in the United Nations given that the Security Council is the council of all the nations. Consequently, any change made to the council is the prerogative of all the nations it represents. Such changes should be put to these nations for discussion and so they can give their opinion.

The editor said that the inclusion of Germany and Japan in the Security Council was not decided by the member countries of the United Nations, they didn't discuss it nor did they make any decision and they shouldn't be forced into accepting any decision they weren't involved in making. The editor said that this trend which involves opening the door to permanent membership in the Security Council and granting the right of veto solely to the powerful industrialised nations indicates a move towards crushing the less powerful nations which sufferred greatly from the monopoly the powerful nations have over the right of veto, a situtions they continue to suffer from. Therefore, there has to be a reassessment of the right of veto itself so that decision making will be in the hands of the General Assembly of the United Nations, that is, in the hands of all the members of this organisation.

China had rejected any change to be made to the Security Council without being put to the General Assembly of the United Nations so they can give their approval.

The editor said that all the talk underway about allowing Japan and Germany to become permanent members of the Security Council, where the spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated, in January, that China

sees that a re-structuring of the Security Council and the inclusion of Japan and Germany as permanent members, could never meet with the approval of the less powerful nations and that such a matter should be put to all the member countries of the General Assembly of the United Nations before any new member is allowed to join the Security Council.

Tunisia

Foreign Ministry Defends Banning of LE MONDE

LD2403191094 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Tunisia, which is committed to press and media freedom being one of the foundations of democracy, indeed agrees with what a French Foreign Ministry spokesman has said about eagerness to respect this freedom. However, it cannot accept that some media sources allow themselves, in the name of this freedom, to commit all sorts of excesses and fail to observe the ethics required by this freedom.

This is stressed by a responsible source in the Foreign Ministry in the wake of the 22 March statements by a French Foreign Ministry spokesman regarding the Tunisian authorities' decision to ban the distribution of LE MONDE newspaper in Tunisia.

The source added that Tunisia adopted this measure with great regret against a newspaper published in a friendly country. However, Tunisia did not just want to express this regret, but also to highlight and condemn what cannot be ignored, which is this newspaper continuing its hostile and slanderous stance toward a country that is known for its tolerance, and whose media landscape remains among the most open landscapes. It is also the country to which neutral observers certify great achievements in all sectors.

The same source adds that these infringements on a sovereign country's dignity and this repeated failure to observe the rules and ethics of the trade are matters that are unacceptable in nature. He recalled that LE MONDE did not content itself by spreading wrong or totally distorted news and commentaries filled with false accusations, but, contrary to common practice, it also often refused Tunisia the right of reply.

Kuwait

National Assembly Foreign Affairs Chief Interviewed

PM2503114094 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 24 Mar 94 p6

[Interview with Jasim al-Saqr, chairman of the Kuwaiti National Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee, by Faris al-Salman in Kuwait; date not given]

[Text] [Al-Salman] What were the reasons for your resignation from the chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Committee?

[Al-Saqr] There were many motives for my resignation but I do not believe it is appropriate to reveal them. They are personal.

[Al-Salman] But it has been claimed that the resignation had something to do with the Gaza-Jericho agreement.

[Al-Saqr] One of the reasons for the resignation was the Gaza-Jericho agreement and the lifting of the boycott of Israel, perhaps because I belong to a generation which has Arab convictions. Generally speaking, my views may not be in harmony with the current trend.

[Al-Salman] Why did you withdraw the resignation?

[Al-Saqr] At the insistence of my colleagues, the Assembly members.

[Al-Salman] To what extent does the Foreign Affairs Committee contribute to the formulation of Kuwait's foreign policy?

[Al-Saqr] In the previous session the National Assembly decided to form a joint overall committee combing the interior and defense and foreign affairs committees to submit a study on Kuwait's affairs, security, and defense strategy. And indeed we did that and I chaired both committees. We began our work during the previous session but the task was not completed.

[Al-Salman] Why not?

[Al-Saqr] Because of the complex diverse issues. We have sought the assistance of some academicians, specialists, and officers and we intend to seek the help of experts in the Arab world, Europe, and the United States. That is why we have requested an extension of the committee's deadline by another year and the Assembly has granted that request.

[Al-Salman] How do you assess the Assembly's achievements?

[Al-Saqr] It made good achievements up to the last third of the second term. For example, it discussed public funds and investments and passed a law for the protection of all public funds. All these were achievements. Let us not forget that this Assembly came after the catastrophe of the Iraqi occupation and it faced challenges in exceptional circumstances not experienced by past legislative assemblies. The public believes that some priority issues are not worth discussing but we should view matters comprehensively and weigh the challenges which Kuwait has had to meet.

[Al-Salman] What is the National Assembly's position on the Damascus Declaration? How do you view it?

[Al-Saqr] We back and support the Damascus Declaration because we see it as a step in the right direction. If we view the Damascus Declaration as an advanced step in the development of the Arab League's work and link it to the regional organization of the Gulf Cooperation Council states on which we pin great hopes, we will see a solid interlinked chain on the right road.

[Al-Salman] What about Iran?

[Al-Saqr] Iran is a neighboring state with which we have geographical and historical links. We seek relations based on mutual respect. That "respect" is what we wish for.

Qatar

Shaykh Khalifah, Husayn Meet, Discuss Bilateral Issues

JN2303183694 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn and the Amir of Qatar Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani have held a meeting at the Guest Palace in Doha, which was attended by senior officials from the Jordanian and Qatari sides. The two sides exchanged views on current regional and international issues of common interest, especially unifying the Arab stand. Discussions also highlighted the latest developments in the peace process following the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and the UN Security Council resolution condemning it. Bilateral relations and means of bolstering them were also discussed.

Taking part for the Jordanian side were the chief of the Royal Court; their Royal Highnesses Prince 'Abdallah and Hamzah; in addition to senior advisers and officials accompanying his majesty the king on his current visit to Qatar. On the Qatari side, attending the talks were the crown prince and minister of defense; the minister of foreign affairs; and other high-ranking Qatari officials.

King Cited on U.S. Remarks on Jerusalem

JN2403113594 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn has praised the fraternal ties between Jordan and the State of Qatar. He voiced pride in the brotherhood that binds them, ties that have long existed on a very strong basis and on frankness and concern for joint Arab interests.

In statements to Qatari media today, his majesty expressed happiness on his visit to Qatar and for being at the side of his brother, his highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani. He voiced confidence that relations between the two countries, which are built on the strongest of bases, will last, God willing. His majesty said: Our aim is to serve and carry out our duties toward generations that will come after us throughout the Arab homeland. The king alluded to the current difficult circumstances and serious challenges. His majesty described this visit as part of the efforts aimed at realizing Arab solidarity and prosperity for the entire Arab nation.

On the call for holding an Arab summit at this stage, His Majesty King Husayn said: We have hoped for a very long time to hold an Arab summit so that the brother leaders can meet and talk frankly on their problems in order to serve their nation's present and future. He noted that His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, the amir of the State of Qatar, has the same desire and hope. The king explained that the date for such a summit is left to us and to all the brothers.

On the U.S. statements that united Jerusalem will be the capital of Israel, his majesty said: Jerusalem is the city we hold to be sacred in our hearts, consciences, and minds and sovereignty over Jerusalem can only belong to Almighty God.

His majesty prayed for God to grant the Arab and Muslim leaders success to enable them to play their role and carry out their duties and keep Jerusalem for their Islamic nation and the believers in God in the place in which it should be.

Saudi Arabia

Paper Examines Clinton Remarks About Jerusalem

PM2403152594 Riyadh AL-RIYAD in Arabic 18 Mar 94 pp 1-2

[Editorial: "The Lost Peace From Camp David to Oslo"]

[Excerpts] When al-Sadat ventured to visit Jerusalem, which the Arabs found harder to bear than the 1967 defeat, the argument for it was that the 1973 war had put the world on a different road, that the Arabs were an influential political and military force, and, because of economic sensitivity, oil had become a card with which to apply pressure on a Western camp which had always used war and diplomacy as reflections of permanent support for Israel.

Whether we accepted or rejected al-Sadat's initiative at the time—and it had its fair share of regional and international analyses—its results may be deemed satisfactory if we consider the current situation and how, although the secret Oslo talks expedited the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, serious concessions have been made giving Israel control of the situation in view of the weakness of the Palestinian position, which is what Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad warned of when he said that the consequences would be devastating for the status of the Palestinians and for their rights to their land, to a state, and to repatriation. [passage omitted]

If the al-Ibrahimi mosque massacre has removed the last Israeli fig leaf, it has also exposed the Palestinian weakness in the eyes of the peacemakers, so much so that U.S. President Clinton did not hesitate to declare Jerusalem Israel's capital and to block any UN Security Council resolution condemning the massacre, a fact which has set back the peace clock because the criteria have moved in the opposite direction through the actions of the prime peace sponsor. That outcome has so stunned and embarrassed the Palestinians that they called for a meeting of the Cordon States, which was tantamount to an admission of the bitter reality they had been driven to through uncalculated peace steps.

Even assuming that the U.S. President was trying to rearrange his mental and political state in the face of his financial scandals, he did utter what he said he would during his election campaign—thereby indicating that he was keeping his promise to Israel and that the Arabs should close this subject in peace negotiations to come later in the more distant future.

Yemen

President Salih Receives Message From Egypt's Mubarak

JN2403143494 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council, today received Bedr Hammam, envoy of Egyptian President Husani Mubarak's and assistant to the Egyptian foreign minister, who conveyed to the brother president a message from his brother President Mubarak. The message deals with close brotherly relations between the two fraternal countries and efforts by the brothers in Egypt to bring viewpoints closer in order to overcome the current political crisis and its regrettable repercussions. The message also deals with issues and developments of interest to our Arab nation.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed aspects of brotherly bilateral relations and means to reinforce them as well as issues of common interest.

YSP Denies Decision To Withdraw Personnel From North

JN2403211194 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2044 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Sanaa, 24 Mar (INA)—A Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP] source has denied that it has decided to close its?

offices in the northern governorates and to withdraw its personnel and return them to southern governorates.

In statements published today, the source described as unfounded fabrication reports published by the London-based Saudi paper AL- HAYAH on this subject.

The source stressed the YSP's unity orientations and adherence to the Yemen's unity.

Military, Political Developments Reported

PM2403174794 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 24 Mar 94 pp1, 4

[Report by Lutfi Shatarah: "Seven Yemeni Soldiers Killed Near Shabwah"]

[Excerpts] Seven soldiers from north and south Yemen were killed in an exchange of fire yesterday as some trucks moved from Ma'rib (in the north) to Bayhan in the governorate of Shabwah (in the south).

Opposition sources in Aden see this as a major blow to the signs of relaxation which some thought were recently beginning to appear as the cabinet held meetings in Aden at the invitation of Prime Minister Engineer Haydar Abu-Bakr al-'Attas. Informed sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the trucks were carrying arms from the north and were intercepted by southern military units on the desert road linking the governorates of Shabwah (in the south) and Ma'rib in the north. In the ensuing exchange of fire seven soldiers were killed outright on both sides and the southern forces seized three trucks. Three other trucks managed to turn back, but three are still missing.

The sources emphasized that this incident, which occurred yesterday, was quickly contained by the Military Coommittee, which is continuing its tour of Shabwah Governorate in the course of its plan to end military moves on both sides.

Political sources in Aden have stated that the cabinet, which met in Aden yesterday for the first time after a three-month suspension, formed three committees: One to study security matters, one to prepare constitutional amendments, and one to study the requirements of the Dialogue Committee and help it play its role of controlling the organs that will implement the Pledge and Accord Document.

The sources regard the measures taken by the government at yesterday's meeting to be a violation of the provisions of the Pledge and Accord Document. [passage omitted]

Opposition sources in Aden said after the annoucement of the government's formation of these committees that what had happened was "the first clear violation of the Amman agreement" and that it was not up to the government to form a constitutional amendment committee because that was within the jurisdiction of the Dialogue Committee. [passage omitted]

Reform Party Official on Terrorism, Conflicts

NC2403211594 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 17 Mar 94 p 6

[Report on interview with Shaykh 'Abd-al-Majid al-Zanadani, representative of the Yemeni Alliance for Reform in the Presidential Council, by Amin Muhammad Amin in Sanaa; date not given]

[Text] Shaykh 'Abd-al-Majid al-Zanadani, member of the Yemeni Presidential Council representing the Yemeni Alliance for Reform [YAR], has affirmed that his party wishes to resolve all existing differences between the General People's Congress Party [GPC] in the north and the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP] in the south. He said his party does not wish to exploit the current differences between the two parties to obtain seats of power in the country.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM held at his residence in Sanaa, Shaykh al-Zanadani said that the YSP wants to internationalize the Yemeni crisis and move it from the House of Representatives to the international community. He clarified that the YAR, the third member of the coalition in the government, wants to keep the Yemeni issue in the hands of its sons. It does not want the dispute to go outside Arab circles for a solution.

The Presidential Council member noted that his party insists on telling the truth, a step that does not satisfy either of the sides to the dispute. We demand that the people's will be respected in accordance with the Pledge and Accord Document. We call for presenting all our issues before the House of Representatives to discuss them and pass the resolutions that bind all sides.

On the conflict between the GPC and the YSP regarding how to implement the document, in which the YSP is demanding that those charged in the assassinations be arrested first, he said that his party supports the GPC on the need to merge the state institutions before arresting the defendants, especially since the government is a coalition between three parties.

Responding to a question on the role the YAR could play in arresting the suspects in the assassinations, he said we always stand by the truth and do not accuse anyone. We demand a fair trial and the elimination of political influences on decisions. He affirmed that the road to power can only be through the ballot box.

Regarding the various accusations that the YAR practices terrorism, he said: I am one of those who experienced an assassination attempt and acts of terrorism before the parliamentary elections. However, the current conflict prompted some sides, especially the YSP, to exploit the issue of terrorism, in particular with some Arab countries that do not know the facts behind the conflict in Yemen. The truth is that there are political and tribal conflicts and that a state of vengeance exists between the YSP in the south and a number of citizens whose sons, brothers, and family members were killed.

Therefore, the problem of revenge will continue to be a time bomb in Yemen if it is not wisely handled.

He noted that the YAR presented a proposal for resolving the problem of vengeance in Yemen. The proposal includes signing an agreement and issuing a decision on stopping Yemeni bloodshed and then setting a date for a general pardon of past incidents. All the chapters of vengeful acts before this date will be closed and the national interests of Yemen will be promoted henceforth.

All murders and acts of revenge that take place after that date will fall under Islamic laws and punishments.

Shaykh 'Abd-al-Majid al-Zanadani denied accusations that he harbors terrorism and heads the military wing of the YAR. He said that there were some youths who were very religious and found out that some people in Aden were behaving in an un-Islamic manner. They found out, for example, that there is an alcoholic beverage plant in Aden and that the police killed demonstrators in the al-Rahman mosque in Aden. As a result, some of these youths adopted violence as a course. Moreover, the YAR advised them to follow peaceful means to find out the truth and handle the situation. Some of them heeded our call and returned to the path of righteousness.

He said that Usamah Bin-Ladin [prominent Saudi businessman] has a group who follow him and carry out some terrorist acts. But some of them regained their senses and backed out of the acts they were supposed to commit.

He clarified that the Islamic nation is torn between two cultures. The first is the culture of decline, which has distorted Islam. The second is the culture of colonialism, which casts doubts over Islam. This is why we all have to work on protecting the fierce onslaught against Islam.

The member of the Presidential Council affirmed the absence of an armed wing in the YAR. He said the Yemeni people are armed anyway. However, we do not call for reform through weapons and killing, but through wisdom and sound advice.

On acts of terrorism in Egypt and accusations that he supports them and harbors some of the Egyptian terrorist groups in Yemen, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Majid al-Zanadani said: I love Egypt and lived there for quite some time. This is why I cannot carry out terrorist acts against it. What harms our Egypt, harms us also. We wish it all the best. We are ready to fully cooperate with it to annihilate terrorism, which is hiding behind the veil of the true Islamic religion.

He said that Yemen is too small to be a source for exporting terrorism to fraternal Egypt.

Regarding the presence of a terrorist camp that he allegedly patronizes in the region of Sa'dah in the north supervised by Shaykh Muqbil, the Presidential Council member said that he does not order people to carry weapons; he fights violence and terrorism. We have recorded tapes of Shaykh Muqbil in which he condemns terrorism. He added: I informed Ambassador 'Ata' Harun, the ambassador from Egypt to Yemen, that we are ready to welcome the visit by any Egyptian official to the headquarters of Shaykh Muqbil in Sa'dah to learn about his school that teaches the Koran and the true religion and whose students are from various nationalities who wish to learn about Islam. It is not a camp for exporting terrorism.

Shaykh 'Abd-al-Majid al-Zanadani concluded his speech: We do not approve the principle of change through force and the use of violence and terrorism. At the same time, we cannot allow Yemen to be a country from which Egypt is harmed.

Rabin: 'Better Formula' Found for Syrian Talks

TA2503082494 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] A better formula for raising the issues between Israel and Syria has been formed. This optimistic and obscure sentence was uttered by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin last night. Rabin once again called on the Syrian regime: Do something to underline the seriousness of your peace intentions. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

[Begin recording] [Segal] Prime Minister Rabin is waiting for a gesture by Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in the coming weeks. According to Rabin, Syria has to underscore its desire for peace with actions and not only words. Rabin hinted at the possibility of progress with the resumption of the talks with Syria in Washington in late April.

[Rabin] I believe that some sort of better formula has been found to clarify the problems between Syria and us.

[Segal] Rabin, who addressed the Council for Peace and Security last night, disclosed that he had decided on a referendum over the future of the Golan Heights in order to signal to the Syrians that they have to do something to convince the Israeli public about the seriousness of their intentions. That is one of the things Rabin would like to see in the negotiations with Syria.

[Rabin] With the Syrians, there is the test of normalization before we discuss the line on which we will have to make a commitment to withdraw.

[Segal] The prime minister referred to the support for the Hebron massacre among some sectors of the Israeli public. Rabin warned against the danger of Jewish racism.

[Rabin] The identification among sectors of Israeli the public were larger than I had anticipated. I view that as a danger of Israeli racism, and more precisely, Jewish racism. [end recording]

Peres on Palestinian Police, Autonomy Talks

TA2503083794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by moderator Hayim Zissowitz and political correspondent Shlomo Raz; place not given—live]

[Text] [Zissowitz] Good morning Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. Can you tell us more about the arrangements reached in Cairo last night?

[Peres] No, I prefer reporting about things that have been finalized, and that has not yet been finalized. Important progress has been made though.

[Zissowitz] What points are still left open?

[Peres] There is unfinished business on both issues discussed.

[Zissowitz] Including the issue of the Palestinian police force?

[Peres] Yes, there are problems of numbers and powers, but I do not want to go into that because it only increases the gaps while negotiations are still in progress. But the very fact that the negotiations are back on track and progress can be made on them is the most important thing that took place in Cairo.

[Raz] Mr. Peres, I would like to ask you about the Palestinian police. Although things have not yet been finalized, how will it be possible to maintain security there since so many elements are involved?

[Peres] There might be many elements, but there will be one element responsible for all decisions dealing with opening fire. There will be no negotiations during an operation.

[Raz] What will happen for instance if the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has an operation against a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] squad, as was the case this week, and the Palestinian police force is deployed between the IDF and the structure in which the terrorists are holed up?

[Peres] We continue to have overall responsibility for security in the territories. We will not and cannot free ourselves of that responsibility. The State of Israel will continue to be responsible for the lives of all the people and will act against those who endanger lives, whether of Jews or Arabs.

[Zissowitz] Is it clear to whom the armed Palestinian police will be subordinate?

[Peres] I do not want to go into that, but it is clear that they will be subordinate to a single authority.

[Zissowitz] On which issue has Israel given in to the Palestinians in the talks?

[Peres] The problem is not of giving in. Israel faced a new situation. Let us discuss the real problem. A monster surrounded by wild weeds appeared among us, something that does not have easy solutions. We must find solutions to situations we did not ask for and we are also dealing with the sensitivities of the residents. It is not a symmetric situation whereby there is a Arab state facing an Israeli state and a Palestinian police force facing an Israeli police force. There is a single state responsible for security, and an issue which starts with peoples' sensitivities. Before you see a knife you have to consider what is motivating it, before you look at a rifle you have to consider what causes somebody to pull the trigger. We must deal with all that in a responsible way. We are not in some circus where you check the trapeze every day to see how far you are jumping. We are a very responsible and determined government.

[Raz] Mr. Peres, will the Palestinian police in Hebron impose its powers on the Jewish settlers?

[Peres] It will not deal with that at all. We are not in favor of mixing powers, but I do not want to go in to all those details; it is too early. Only when the negotiations are completed will we be able to make public all the details. We are aware of the subjects you have raised. We do not want to bring about friction and clashes; on the contrary, we want to reduce friction and prevent clashes, we want to assure security.

[Zissowitz] Have the Palestinians withdrawn their demand to evacuate the Jewish settlers from the heart of Hebron?

[Peres] They never presented it as an ultimatum. When they raised the issue, even though not as an ultimatum, we told them unequivocally that the issue of settlers, settlements, and population dispersal are Israel's sole responsibility and we will not agree to any change because of pressures or negotiations. In the negotiations themselves we agreed that all the settlements can remain intact.

[Zissowitz] At least for the time being, will the Jewish settlers remain where they are?

[Peres] I do not know what for the time being means. It is hard to constantly operate with a stopwatch and count the hours.

[Zissowitz] I would like to know whether the demand to evacuate the settlers has been removed from the agenda?

[Peres] It does not depend on the Palestinians at all, it is a decision Israel must make in a responsible way and on its own. I have nothing to say about proposals or intentions. A government does not have to make public proposals and intentions on a daily basis. When it decides to make a decision it does so.

[Raz] Mr. Peres, on Tuesday the Gaza-Jericho talks resume and that is in fact the main issue in the negotiations.

[Peres] That is correct.

[Raz] How long will that phase take and when will the new deployment on the ground—the withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho—start?

[Peres] There is no doubt that there will be speedy negotiations. All the committees, including the economic committee, will convene in Cairo in order to coordinate and speed up the negotiations. There are differences of opinion. There are those who say it will take two weeks and there are those who say it will take three weeks. What I can say with certainty is that all the sides, definitely our side, will contribute everything needed to speed up the process.

[Zissowitz] The talks with the Palestinians will continue in Cairo and not Washington?

[Peres] Two different things have to be made clear. The Gaza-Jericho negotiations will be held in Cairo. The negotiations on the autonomy will continue in Washington, as has been the case up to now. We are, in fact, talking about two different processes.

Commander: 'Terrorists' Very Senior Hamas Members

TA2403200994 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1930 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Major General Sha'ul Mufaz, commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] forces in Judaea and Samaria, said this evening that the three terrorists killed by the security forces in Hebron belonged to one of the most prominent terror squads in the territories. Maj. Gen. Mufaz told correspondents that so far three bodies were found in the building in which the terrorists barricaded themselves. Mufaz says these terrorists were involved in a long series of attacks, including the murder of Mordekhay and Shalom Lapid in Hebron, and the murder of Avraham Zarbiv near the Cave of the Patriarchs.

Maj. Gen. Mufaz said that following the operation in Hebron only 10 Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad terrorists remain operating in Judaea and Samaria. Mufaz added that the Hebron operation was made possible by strenuous Shin Bet efforts. According to Mufaz the house in which the terrorists hid served as a storehouse and a launch pad for Hamas terror acts.

'Dozens' Wounded in Incidents in Territories

TA2403192394 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Video report by correspondent Rina Matzliah]

[Text] There were violent incidents in all the cities of the territories following the battle in Hebron yesterday. Dozens of Palestinians were injured and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] clamped a curfew on Nabulus and its environs. A general commercial strike was declared in the territories. Our correspondent Rina Matzliah sums up today's incidents:

The territories resembled today the early days of the intifadah. Serious stone-throwing incidents occurred downtown Nabulus today. The IDF unsuccessfully tried to disperse the rioters with tear gas. Approximately 17 Nabulus youths were wounded by IDF gunfire. A border policeman was slightly wounded. The IDF imposed a curfew on the city and nearby refugee camps.

There were also disturbances in Ramallah and al-Duhayshah today. Sixteen youths were wounded by IDF gunfire in the Jabalyah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. Another four were wounded in the al-Burayj and al-Nusayrat refugee camps. The youths are at the vanguard

of today's violent confrontation, which is depicted as a struggle of solidarity with the residents of Hebron.

Belgian Paper Reports Soldiers Attack UN Official

BR2403160094 Brussels LA LIBRE BELGIQUE in French 24 Mar 94 p 5

[Renee-Anne Gutter report: "Soldiers Attack Belgian UN Official"]

[Excerpts] Jerusalem—If Israel wishes to convince the PLO that unarmed foreign observers will suffice to ensure the protection of the Palestinians and their own security, it will have to go about it in a different way. Indeed, while the Rabin government is in the middle of negotiations with the PLO on a possible international presence in the occupied territories, the Israeli Army launched a particularly brutal attack on observers already on the spot, in this case a Belgian woman, An Mertens, from Scherpenheuvel who has been working on the West Bank since September 1992 for the UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency] as a refugee affairs officer. [passage omitted]

Israel has never officially recognized the refugee affairs officers but tolerates them and generally allows them to travel round without too many hindrances. Until last Tuesday. On a routine mission with her Palestinian assistant in the Tulkarm region of the West Bank, An Mertens saw soldiers in the Nur-al-Shams refugee camp "beating up" two young Palestinian children, and a television crew arriving on the scene. Trying to calm down one of the soldiers, she was suddenly thrown to the ground, her hands bound by plastic handcuffs, dragged to the camp exit, and left for several minutes, forced to remain kneeling, her head down, with the tight handcuffs cutting into her skin. Shortly afterwards her assistant suffered the same fate.

The two were finally released without any other proceedings but are still finding it difficult to recover from their bruises and shock. [passage omitted]

Was this excessive zeal on the part of a local junior officer? Is it general nervousness on the part of the Army in the wake of the Hebron massacre? At all events, the UNRWA intends to inform UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali and make a complaint against Israel.

Arms Sales Affected by Hebron Massacre

TA2403122894 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 24 Mar 94 p A8

[Report by defense affairs correspondent Sharon Sade]

[Text] Several states which have defense ties with Israel have asked to "lower the profile" of these relations after the Cave of the Patriarchs' massacre, for both diplomatic and internal political reasons, a senior military source said yesterday.

This led to a slow down in contacts to complete deals for Israeli military hardware and to second thoughts by representatives of foreign governments about going ahead with visits to Israel.

French Defense Minister Francois Leotard, who completed a visit to Israel 10 days ago, dispatched a special envoy to Israel several days prior to his arrival to study the situation in the wake of the Hebron massacre.

Sources close to the French Defense Ministry reported that the French Government—which maintains close political and defense ties with the Arab states—found itself in an uncomfortable position due to the timing of the visit so soon after the massacre.

The political situation following the massacre also influences ties with Muslim Turkey, which recently enhanced its defense ties with Israel. Following President 'Ezer Weizman's visit to Turkey in January, Israeli military firms are participating in tenders to refurbish Phantom and F-15 aircraft for the Turkish Air Force.

Since the visit, which helped to formalize the defense ties between the two countries, the contacts have continued at various working levels but no large deals have yet been finalized. The Turks nevertheless agreed to Israel deploying a military attache at its embassy in Turkey and he will arrive there in several weeks. Defense sources, however, believe the move is inadvisable. Turkey is on the eve of municipal elections, which will indicate the strength of the ruling parties. According to public opinion polls, the present government will not gain significant support in these elections. If that is the case, this government might be forced to resign and be replaced by a new government with which Israel will have to start new negotiations.

Germany is another country which recently asked to moderate its overt defense ties with Israel for political and diplomatic reasons.

The Germans recently cut their defense budget significantly in the wake of the union with the East and diverted financial resources for internal needs, a move which harmed military purchases from Israel, mainly of ammunition from the Israel Military Industries.

According to evaluations by defense sources, Germany will complete its reunification process next year when its internal situation will start to improve. If that happens, the sources believe, new procurement budgets will be presented and an improvement in trade ties with Israel will be felt.

Kakh Activist Sentenced to 6 Months Imprisonment

TA2403150094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] The Jerusalem Magistrate's Court has meted out a six month prison sentence to Tiran Pollak, a member of Kakh's Committee for Security on the Roads. Pollak was

convicted of assault, disturbing a policeman, and rioting. Our police affairs correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports the judge acquiesced to Pollak's request to incarcerate him only after the Passover holiday.

Police Detain 11 Golan Druze for Seditious Action

TA2403190394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] The Police yesterday detained 11 Druze youths from the village of Majdal Shams on the Golan Heights. They are suspected of belonging to the young nationalists Druze organization which aims at putting an end to Israeli rule on the Golan and harming the security forces. Our correspondent Yo'av Aviv reports that more arrests are expected.

Rabbis Differ Over Jewish Evacuation From Hebron

TA2403111794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Israel's chief rabbis differ over the question of evacuating the Jewish settlers from Hebron. Ashkenazi Rabbi Yisra'el Lau opposes their evacuation, while Sephardic Rabbi Baqshi Doron believes that the duty to save lives overrides the biblical duty to maintain a Jewish settlement in Hebron.

Our correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld reports that interviews with the two rabbis will appear in tomorrow's edition of the ultra-Orthodox paper YOM HASHISHI.

Rabbi Lau goes on to say in the interview that even if politicians and the military rule that the Palestinians should be given self-rule, this should be done in a way so as not to undermine our right over Eretz Yisra'el.

Both rabbis lash out at the Religious Affairs Ministry which, as they see it, impinges on the authority of the Chief Rabbinate.

Polls Show 60 Percent Support Talks With PLO

TA2403123594 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 24 Mar 94 p 9

[Report by Arye Kiesel]

[Text] Some 60 percent of Israelis support continuing the negotiations with the PLO, according to Professor Asher Ariane of Tel Aviv University's Center for Strategic Research.

The research is based on analysis of polls conducted between 1984 and 1994.

Seventy-one percent support autonomy in the territories, while 31 percent support the establishment of a Palestinian state. Support for the Oslo accord is declining but a majority still support it.

Only six percent believe that the government is dealing properly with the country's problems. Some 34 percent said that the government is dealing with the issues satisfactorily, while 61 percent are dissatisfied with its handling of the situation.

Thirty-two percent believe that most Arabs aspire to annihilate Israel and kill all the Jews. Twenty-three percent believe that the Arabs "only want to conquer Israel." Thirty-three percent believe that the Arabs want "to get back the lands they lost in 1967."

On the Oslo agreement: 36 percent support a Gaza-Jericho agreement, 25 percent "are not sure about the agreement," and 32 percent "oppose the agreement." Support for the agreement under the latest poll is lower than in the December 1993 poll when 48 percent backed it.

Those interviewed think the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has been weakened over the years, but that if the peace negotiations succeed it will be able to regain its power.

Eighty-four percent believe the Gaza Strip should be returned. Ten percent are ready to return East Jerusalem. On the settlements: a third supports them, a quarter opposes them, and the remainder are ready to support them for security reasons.

Fifty-five percent oppose uprooting settlements under a permanent arrangement. Thirty-four percent are "very opposed" to such a move, and 21 percent oppose it "to some extent." The remainder, 45 percent, "definitely support uprooting settlements."

On Syria, 46 percent are not prepared to return any part of the Golan Heights while seven percent are ready to return all of the plateau.

Tourism Firm Targets Jordanians, Palestinians

JN2403182094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1530 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Report by Fu'ad Shabi, correspondent for tourist affairs, from the "With the Events" feature]

[Text] One of the important projects targeting tourist cooperation among Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian financiers is a project to build a large tourist facility in the Kaliya area, north of the Dead Sea. This facility will include a group of hotels of various classes. The hotels will have 1,700 rooms. Talks in this regard are being held among the Africa-Israel Investments Limited [preceding name in English as heard], an Israeli investment and tourist affairs company managed by Mr. Shlomo (Groffmann) and two investment groups, one Palestinian and the other Jordanian.

(Groffmann) said his firm is also in touch with investors in other Arab and Islamic states to launch economic and tourist projects in these states.

This Israeli firm had concessions to manage the cartel of Holiday Inn hotels in Israel, a well-known international

cartel. (Groffmann) added that his company has recently created a special framework that it called the peace tourism project, in cooperation with Dr. Yosef Hadas, who was the director general of the Foreign Ministry only a few months ago. The aim of this framework, he noted, is to launch joint tourism projects with Palestinians and neighboring Arab states.

With regard to the Kaliya project north of the Dead Sea, it will extend over a tract of land with an area of 310 donums, territory completely owned by his company, and another tract, whose area totals 670 donums, one-third of which is owned by his company. The final cost of this project stands at $250 million.

Correction to Commentary: U.S. Leaning Towards Israel Harms Peace

WA2503162094

The following correction pertains to the item headlined: "Commentary: U.S. Leaning Toward Israel Harms Peace," published in the 8 March Near East & South Asia DAILY REPORT, page 52:

Column one, last line, make read: [Commentary by 'Aqiva Eldar: "Turn the Pyramid Upside Down"]

[Text] Washington—Since the signing ceremony at the White House, Israeli and U.S. politicians have tried to paint this tmeporary and partial agreement in peace colors. This would not have been so bad had they not started believing that the negotiations on limited autonomy in Gaza and Jericho would bring the Middle East into a new era. Instead of reading the writing on the wall, they preferred to become immersed in daydreams about the end of days.

It is characteristic that in the week of the Cave of the Patriarch murders, Jordanian diplomats found it hard to wriggle out of....(supplying dropped passage)

King Discusses Gulf Tour, U.S. Jerusalem Policy

JN2403174094 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Excerpt] His Majesty King Husayn returned to the homeland this afternoon with God's care at the end of visits to the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar. During his visits, his majesty and his brother Sultan Qabus Bin Sa'id, and his brother his Highness Qatari Amir Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, exchanged views on various current Arab and international issues, in addition to the unqiue relations between Jordan and each of the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar, and the latest developments in the peace process in the wake of UN Security Council Resolution No. 904.

His Majesty King Husayn spoke to the press about the visits following his return to the homeland:

[Begin recording] [Husayn] In the name of God, the merciful, the compasionate. The visit to the Sultanate of Oman, the meeting with the brother sultan and the relatives there was excellent. It is a continuation of the solid relations between us; relations among brothers. Also, my visit to fraternal Qatar was a very good visit. It gave us the opportunity to discuss all matters that interest us in the Arab homeland, and the course of events, such as the peace process and the situation in the occupied territories with respect to the past and the present. Thank God, the solid groundwork on which we established our relations years ago are still solid.

[Unidentified reporter] Sir, how do you view the scope of joint Arab action in light of your visit to the fraternal countries?

[Husayn] We have every hope that God almighty will guide the Arab leaders so they realize the importance of these circumstances and the need for work to confront these challenges in a manner that satisfies all of us. It goes without saying that these are fateful challenges. As for the brothers I visited, it seems to me, or I am confident, that we proceed in the same direction and adopt the same approach toward all that has taken place.

[Reporter] What about your talks with Sultan Qabus about Jordanian-Omani joint efforts on Yemeni reconciliation. Is there anything new in this respect?

[Husayn] The new thing is that, thanks to God, there has been an effort that was successful from the beginning. We have been working for many months. This is our duty in response to a Yemeni and Arab request, and out of our duty toward our brothers. Then came the document, and Yemen, with all its representatives meeting here, ratified the document. We were then surprised by the painful and disturbing reports. A joint military delegation left and assumed its role as best it can. Thanks be to God, they completed their task. With respect to the future, I am confident that we will always be ready to carry out any duty. However, the basic job should be done by the brothers in Yemen toward what they ratified and what reflects, in my opinion, the aspirations and wishes of all the sons of Yemen. We ask God for the success of the task we and the brothers in Oman have carried out.

[Reporter] Your majesty, there are resolutions that preceded resolution 904 on Jerusalem, saying that it is occupied Arab land. How do you view Jordan's stand in this direction?

[Husayn] We now seek clarifications on the stand. But, all the UN Security Council resolutions view Jerusalem as part of the Arab lands that were occupied in 1967. It seems that a few years ago, there was a warning from the U.S. side that if the question of Jerusalem was raised, then the stand would be the one that has taken place, or they said that their stand would be firmer with respect to using the veto. Actually, and as I said a fews days ago, I was taken by surprise by the situation on Friday. I was in the south, and I immediately returned. Perhaps, for certain considerations, it was a mistake to raise the issue of Jerusalem. The world at large knows Jerusalem is part of the ocupied Arab territories. In any case, we seek to obtain assurances that the stand on this reality and situation has not changed. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Further on King's Comments

JN2403212594 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 24 Mar 94

[From the "New at Ten" program]

[Excerpts] His majesty the king returned home today after visits to Oman and Qatar and talks with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id and Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani. [passage omitted]

His majesty expressed satisfaction at his visits and told the "News at Ten" that everything was back to normal.

[Begin recording] [Husayn] It was excellent. I really had an opportunity to have a very frank and open discussion with all my brethren whom I met during these last few days in Oman, where we have had excellent relations throughout our history. And in Qatar, they were established many years ago on a very solid foundation of confidence and trust. I think everything is back to normal and our views are, I believe, much the same, as we face problems and challenges throughout this region and in this life.

[Reporter] Do you care to say anything about what happened yesterday [23 March] in Hebron?

[Husayn] I was shocked to hear what happened on the news. And obviously, we'll be seeing what details emerge. Right now, not much details are available here.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, where do you see the future of Jerusalem, especially with the latest events?

[Husayn] That's a very difficult question to respond to immediately now. What I have felt over a long period of

time is that the holy places in Jerusalem—important to all of us—should revert to only the sovereignty of God over them. Important to all believers. Beyond that, as far as the Muslim holy places are concerned, we have called, as you know, for a body that would represent all the different schools within our Islamic world to share in addressing the problem. We are the custodians of these holy places, hopefully, in the future. And we've also encouraged interfaith dialogue between the followers of the three great religions. [end recording]

His majesty also told Jordan Television that Jordan was seeking clarification on the American position regarding the status of Jerusalem. He added that Jordan is also seeking assurances that nothing has changed with regards to Jerusalem as an occupied Arab land. The king stressed that Jordan recognizes no sovereignty over the holy city except that of God almighty.

King's 'Successful Visits' to Oman, Qatar Viewed

JN2503105094 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic
25 Mar 94 pp 1, 27

[Unattributed editorial: "King Husayn's Successful Visits to the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar"]

[Text] The successful visits His Majesty King Husayn made to the Sultanate of Oman and to Qatar, and his meetings with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id and His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani have been the culmination of his majesty's continuous efforts to restore cohesion to the Arab ranks in order to confront the dangerous stage through which our nation is passing.

Jordan, Oman, and Qatar have identical positions on Arab solidarity, joint Arab action, and the need to begin a new Arab stage that overcomes the negative elements of the past and takes into consideration the Arab nation's interest and future. However, some Arab positions are still hostage to these negative elements and fail to overcome them. Furthermore, these positions adhere to weak arguments and advance stands that are based on deceptive imaginations and facts which aim to implement the biggest conspiracy that targeted Iraq and the Arab nation as a whole in what was called the Gulf crisis.

His majesty the king's statements to the Qatari media and Jordanian journalists reflect Jordan's firm and principled commitment to the higher pan-Arab interests and eagerness to maintain the minimum joint Arab action. The statements also demonstrate the efforts with sincere brothers to overcome the disaster and to start laying down new bases for Arab solidarity, based on mutual respect, eagerness to maintain the nation's rights and interests, and coordination of positions on peace negotiations, the status of Jerusalem, and support for the steadfastness of the kinsfolk in the occupied territories in face of occupation and in their just struggle to restore their legitimate rights, led by restoration of occupied Palestinian territories and the right to self-determination.

Undoubtedly, His Majesty King Husayn's emphasis on the status of Jerusalem as part of the occupied territories, as stipulated in all international resolutions, and on linking the fate of the holy city to the current Arab situation is a renewed call on Arab leaders to meet, have frank discussion, evaluate what happened so far in peace negotiations, and coordinate Arab positions on Jerusalem in particular, and the Arab causes in general.

Al-Majali Says Peace 'Strategic Arab Quest'

JN1903173094 Amman Radio Jordan in English
1700 GMT 19 Mar 94

[Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali has said His Majesty King Husayn was keen on Yemen's unity as a model for Arab world. He told the Yemeni magazine ADWA' AL-YAMAN that his majesty had strong belief that the Arab nation at large was destined to achieve unity and reconciliation.

Dr. al-Majali said his majesty had sincerely extended a hand of reconciliation to all Arabs, particularly at the current stage when the Arab world was facing a critical time on the new world order and regional order.

The prime minister said the Hebron mosque massacre was a heinous and unprecedented crime whereas unarmed victims were murdered in cold blood at the sacred shrine.

Dr. al-Majali said peace was a strategic Arab quest which should not be abandoned.

U.S. 'Pressures' for Jordan-Israel Peace Seen

JN2403114694 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic
24 Mar 94 pp 1, 18

[Text] AKHBAR AL-USBU' has learned that U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross promised the Jordanian Government to consider easing U.S. pressures on Jordan. These pressures have recently been intensified with the aim of forcing Jordan to sign a separate peace treaty with the Israelis. The U.S. envoy, however, refused to make any promises that these pressures would be lifted. He said only that his government would study the Jordanian demands.

The U.S. Administration stepped up its pressures on Jordan during the U.S. envoy's tour of the region by intercepting ships and holding them in international waters, sometimes for over a week, on the pretext of inspecting them or the claim that they are carrying banned goods bound for Iraq.

Washington asked the Jordanian Government through its envoy Dennis Ross to end the second and third degree Arab boycott of Israel and support the Arab states calling for the lifting of this boycott at the Arab League meetings in Cairo next Saturday.

The U.S. envoy said that the continuation of the U.S. and European aid to Jordan is conditional on Amman's response to the following specific U.S. terms and conditions:

1. Expediting negotiations on the Jordanian-Israeli track.
2. Sparing talk about the issue of Jerusalem because this will be discussed in the final stages of the peace process.
3. Ending the Arab boycott of Israel and dealing with the U.S. companies that trade with Israel, have branches in Israel, or are engaged in joint ventures with the Israelis. This will be a prelude to eventually dealing with the Israeli companies and to opening Jordanian markets to their products.
4. Canceling the government protectionism of some domestic products and allowing for free trade.
5. Intensifying the embargo on Iraq and banning the entry of any mechanical [ali] materials except through the United Nations.
6. Suspending Jordanian media campaigns against the Israeli policy and stopping the mobilization of the masses against Israel.
7. Ending the activities of the Palestinian organizations opposing the U.S. policy, and pursuing their members.
8. Pursuing the hardline Islamic current that is hostile to U.S. policy, and supporting the moderate Islamists who do not engage in politics. According to the U.S. proposal, this will be a cover for government pursuit of political Islamists.
9. Cooperating with the United States in pursuing international terrorism.
10. Expediting the implementation of the International Monetary Fund reforms.

AKHBAR AL-USBU' has also learned that the U.S. Administration has asked its friends in the region not to support Jordan on the political, economic, or media levels as a retribution for its positions. It is also seeking to isolate Jordan and besiege it politically and economically in order to force it to yield to the U.S.-Israeli conditions.

Sources in the U.S. delegation that accompanied Mr. Ross on his Amman visit voiced resentment over the harsh Jordanian campaign the Jordanian House of Representatives launched against the U.S. policy a few hours before the U.S. envoy's arrival. Responding to this, a responsible Jordanian source said: The Americans can ask the deputies and parties. The Jordanian Government does not officially interfere in this. These are popular demands and Jordan is a democratic country.

In a related development, an Arab official in Washington confirmed to AKHBAR AL-USBU' that in the wake of Security Council Resolution 904, which condemned the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, Jordan began to face tremendous U.S. pressure to expedite the peace process with Israel. He added: These pressures are represented in the U.S. retraction of a commitment to lift the siege on the port of al-'Aqabah and in growing media campaigns against the pan-Arab Jordanian position so that Jordan will continue to be isolated on the Arab level, in addition to threats to withhold U.S. and European financial aid. The impact of the U.S. pressure and threats on the Jordanian track of the peace process will be weak and will not serve the cause of peace, nor will any economic or political embargo that leads to Jordan's isolation serve the cause of peace.

Continuing, he said: The onslaught on Jordan has been exposed to the Jordanian people, who are suffering from the siege on al-'Aqabah. Moreover, there is interference to prevent pan-Arab cooperation and coordination with Syria to get out of the Israeli bottleneck, which the United States is strongly seeking to impose on the peace tracks, especially the Jordanian track, and expedite a solution in accordance with the Israeli concept.

Egypt's Postponement of Talks Blamed on U.S.

JN2403092394 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 24 Mar 94 p 1

[Text] Within the framework of the U.S. efforts to isolate and pressure Jordan, the Egyptian prime minister's visit to Jordan has been postponed for the second time for no good reason. The Egyptian Government asked the Jordanian Government to postpone the Higher Jordanian-Egyptian Committee meetings, which were scheduled to be held at the end of this month, to another date to be fixed through bilateral contacts. According to Egyptian sources, the meetings will be held in April. The Egyptian Government attributed this postponement to Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi's preoccupation with urgent domestic and foreign affairs.

Official Jordanian sources were displeased with the last-minute Egyptian request, the second of its kind, as it indicates that the Egyptian Government is not serious about strengthening its relations with Jordan.

It will be recalled that Jordanian-Egyptian relations have been strained due to the Gulf war and the Middle East peace process, for which Egypt is apparently very enthusiastic, not to mention the profit and loss factors.

Further on House Reaction to U.S. Vote at UN

JN2303145894 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 23 Mar 94 pp 1, 5

[Report by JORDAN TIMES staff reporter P.V. Vivekanand]

[Text] Amman—The Lower House of Parliament on Tuesday [22 March] condemned the U.S. abstention from voting on references to the status of Jerusalem and other Israeli-occupied territories in Friday's U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the Feb. 25 massacre at a mosque in the West Bank town of Hebron.

In a statement issued on the last day of its first regular session, the House said the U.S. abstention during voting on Resolution 904 signalled a "clear change in the

American stand," which had hitherto viewed Jerusalem as well as other Palestinian territories as occupied.

"The Lower House of Parliament condemns the American position and calls on the parliaments of Arab and Islamic countries as well as those of countries which support just causes to protest against the American stand," the statement said.

The Lower House said it "deeply regretted the weak coordination among the Arab delegations at the world body" leading to the adoption of the resolution which did not satisfy the Arab position.

It was an indirect swipe at the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which held extensive consultations with the U.S. on the wording of Resolution 904 since it was first drafted shortly after the Feb. 25 massacre.

The delay was caused by American insistence on deleting parts of the draft and differences with the PLO on the phrasing and wording of the document.

His Majesty King Husayn said in a recent interview that Jordan was not a party to the consultations over the draft and noted that he had launched a personal effort to come up with a joint Arab stand vis-a-vis the issue a few hours before the Security Council adopted the resolution.

The king said the door would not have been open for the U.S. to abstain on parts of the resolution had the document omitted any specific reference to Jerusalem and referred to the territories that Israeli occupied in the 1967 war in a general context.

The American abstention has sounded alarm bells in Jordan, which saw Washington's posture as paving the way for the eventual recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Since 1967, the U.S. stand on the occupied territories had remained constant based on the rejection of Israeli occupation of the land until Friday's vote, which cast doubts on the U.S. intentions.

The American stand was viewed as an intentional precedent-setting move to eventually change its rejection of Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem.

The king said he was seeking an expalantion from Washington whether there was any shift in the U.S. stand.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said after the vote that Washington did not want to prejudge the outcome of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations by adopting any position on issues involved in the conflict.

Officials said Tuesday that the issue was to be raised during talks with U.S. envoy Dennis Ross who was paying a brief visit to Amman late Tuesday.

"We hope to get some explanation of the American stand and what its obstention means," said one highly-placed official (see separate story).

Tuesday's parliament statement also expressed regret that Resolution 904, adopted after "three weeks of delays and procrastination...only condemned the massacre, carried out by Zionist settlers aided by the occupation forces, and did not condemn the Israeli authorities responsible for the massacre."

The statement called on Arab leaders to put aside their differences and convene a summit conference to discuss the "situation of the Palestinian people living under Zionist occupation" and to "shoulder their responsibilities towards Palestinians who are subjected to consistent campaigns of genocide."

The House voiced appreciation "of the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and their commitment to their land and their rights" and reaffimed Jordan's support for the Palestinian struggle for liberation.

Bomb Found, Defused in 5-Star Amman Hotel

JN2503081594 Amman AKHIR KHABAR in Arabic 24 Mar 94 p 1

[Text] Sources at the Forte Grand (formerly the Plaza) Hotel [five-star hotel in Amman] have said that security forces yesterday defused a bomb that was found inside the hotel. The security agencies evacuated the hotel and the surrounding area during the search for the bomb.

Wrapup of Israeli Military Activity in South Lebanon

Artillery Brought In

NC2303182394 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] According to reports received from the south, the Israeli occupation forces have brought in 15 pieces of artillery across the al-Kharadli Bridge inside the border strip and deployed them south of the Balat township.

AFP cited sources in the port of Tyre as saying that the Israeli navy kidnapped seven Lebanese fishermen after firing on their boats inside Lebanon's territorial water. The sources added that the kidnappers towed the fishermen's boats to the port of Nahariyya.

Iqlim al-Tuffah Areas Bombarded

NC2403125094 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Israeli forces have continued bombardment of the Iqlim al-Tuffah heights and hills since this morning at a rate of one round every 10 minutes. Shells are landing in Jabal al-Rafi', al-Wadi al-Akhdar, the outskirts of 'Arab Salim, Mlita, al-Luwayzah, Yatar, and Jibal al-Butm. Israeli helicopters dropped flares over these areas early this morning. At 1015 today, two shells fell in the area east of Kafr Rumman, accompanied by bursts of machine-gun fire.

Gunfire Exchanged

NC2403072194 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Israel is trying to heat up the security situation in the south to confuse Lebanese Government officials and cover up its crimes, notably the children killed in al-Nabatiyah a few days ago by Israeli shelling. Tension and anxiety prevail in the southern areas adjacent to the occupied border strip in the wake of continued threats by Israeli leaders to launch a new war. Israeli shelling of southern areas have continued and more Israeli reinforcements have been brought to the occupied border strip.

The resistance men and the occupation forces and their agents exchanged artillery fire yesterday. The Israeli forces bombarded the al-Litani River basin, the outskirts of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, Arnun, al-Hamra' plantation, the Habbush bridge, the outskirts of 'Arab Salim, Kafr Rumman, al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, Kafr Tibnit, Jabal al-Rafi', Mlita, al-Luwayzah, Jabal Safi, Mimis, Marj al-Zuhur, and 'Ayn al-Tinah.

Israeli helicopters flew intensive sorties over the line separating the south and the occupied area and fired flares over the western slopes of Mount Hermon. Israeli gunboats cruised off the Lebanese coast between al-Zahrani and al-Naqurah throughout last night. Israeli forces brought 15 artillery pieces to the al-Khardali bridge and stationed them south of the township of Blat.

This just in from a NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY CORRESPONDENT in al-Nabatiyah: The Israeli forces bombarded the al-Sit Zubaydah bridge, the outskirts of Habbush, and the road linking al-Nabatiyah with Iqlim al-Tuffah between 0100 and 0430 today.

Israeli Posts Attacked

NC2503071094 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Israel is continuing its military pressure on Lebanon in an attempt to confuse the social peace process and to cover up its crimes and intimidation of Lebanon. Israel implemented its threats last night when it carried out large-scale aggression against the south. Shortly after 2000 yesterday, Israeli forces bombarded Lebanese villages. The bombardment of several areas is continuing at this moment. A NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in al- Nabatiyah reports:

[Correspondent] There is a high alert in al-Nabatiyah and nearby villages, particularly the Iqlim al-Tuffah villages, as a result of violent artillery and rocket fire to which they have been subjected since last night. The bombardment, which grew more violent at dawn today, was continuing when this newscast was being prepared. Heavy rounds are falling in the villages of Habbush, Kafr Rumman, 'Arab Salim, Jarju', Jabal al-Rafi, Mlita, Jabal Safi, and al-Luwayzah. The explosions are heard throughout the whole region. Shells also fell on the main highway linking al-Nabatiyah with Iqlim al-Tuffah, particularly the Sit Zubaydah bridge. The bombardment is accompanied by bursts from heavy and medium machine-guns in Israeli and agent [South Lebanese Army] positions in al-Suwayda', Sujud, and 'Ali al-Tahir mountain. Violent clashes involving the use of machine guns and rockets raged in the 'Ali al-Tahir hills and al-Suwayda' area at 2030 yesterday between the resistance men and the Israeli forces and their agents.

Panic is gripping the people in these areas as a result of the continuing shelling. They have not slept for fear of indiscriminate bombing.

Just in from the editor's desk: All villages in Iqlim al-Tuffah have been under violent bombardment since 0615 today. Thirty-five shells have landed in these areas this morning.

A NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent reports that groups of the resistance men attacked enemy positions in Saydun and Dayr Shaqadif at dawn today. The Islamic Resistance issued a statement saying that its men succeeded in gaining control these positions and killing the personnel manning them. The statement said that Islamic Resistance men also attacked hostile positions in al-Burj, Qasr Salim, Kafr Falus, Sujd, and Bi'r Kallab.

Shelling Intensifies 25 Mar

NC2503072994 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0713 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in al-Nabatiyah has reported that the Israeli aggression against Iqlim al-Tuffah intensified a short time ago. All the villages of the region are under heavy bombardment by 175-mm artillery. He also reported that two women were martyred in Jba' as a result of the Israeli shelling of the town.

Citing a report from the internal security forces, the correspondent reports that five shells of unknown caliber fell on the occupied town of Marj 'Uyun after 0830. The shells were fired from an unknown position.

'State of Maximum Alert' Declared

NC2503093494 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Security sources in Marj 'Uyun have confirmed that Israel brought in around 500 troops backed by 150 vehicles and three 155-mm artillery batteries in the past few hours and deployed them in the Hasbayya area in the east to the Bint Jubayl area in the west opposite the Lebanese Army and resistance positions.

A state of maximum alert was declared all along the international borders with Lebanon since the early hours of dawn today.

SLA, Lebanese Army Join Against Hizballah Attacks

NC2503090594 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0815 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] Our military correspondent has just reported that the Lebanese Army position in Saydun in the Jazzin area was attacked by saboteurs at dawn today. The South Lebanese Army [SLA] provided support for the Lebanese Army post. A number of posts in the Jazzin area, Jazzin, and al-'Ayshiyah came under artillery and rocket fire from saboteurs' positions. The SLA artillery returned fire at the sources located outside the villages, although most of the firing came from inside the villages. Our correspondent notes that the saboteurs passed through Lebanese Army checkpoints in a region outside the border strip to attack a Lebanese Army position. Our correspondent confirms that Hizballah's claims that it attacked five SLA positions are totally false.

[Paris AFP in English at 0831 GMT on 25 March in a Sidon-datelined item adds the following:

["Iranian-backed Hizballah guerrillas on Friday killed three fighters with Israel's proxy militia in south Lebanon, security services said.

["The three South Lebanon Army militiamen were killed in the area of Jazzin, which Israel controls, during a dawn offensive by Hizballah against eight SLA positions, they said.

["Hizballah said in a statement earlier that it had seized two small forts, captured two SLA militiamen and destroyed three Soviet-built tanks sent as reinforcements. It said its fighters left "several killed or wounded."

["The SLA's Voice of the South radio confirmed the attacks but did not mention casualties. It said two of its militiamen were taken prisoner at Nab' al-Safa, about one kilometer (0.6 miles) outside Israel's self-declared security zone.

["SLA artillery hit back firing about 200 shells against a dozen villages in the Iqlim at-Tuffah range, a Hizballah stronghold southeast of Sidon, Lebanese police said.

["A mother and her son were killed when a shell slammed into their home in Jba', police added.

["On Monday, two Israeli soldiers and two SLA militiamen were killed in attacks claimed by Hizballah and a hardline Palestinian group based in Damascus, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

["The retaliatory shelling killed three civilians, including two school children, and wounded 24 others including 15 pupils who were on a school bus."]

Al-Hariri Receives U.S. Message on South

NC2303132594 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Excerpt] U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Mark Hambley, who visited Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri today, said he conveyed a message from the U.S. Government to the Lebanese Government on the tragic situation in the south. [passage omitted]

Two LF Centers Stormed, Weapons Seized

NC2403181294 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] As part of the storming and search campaigns undertaken by the military and security forces, a Lebanese Army unit last night stormed the housing project building belonging to the former Lebanese Forces [LF] in the township of Burayj, Qada' Jubayl. Large amounts of weapons and ammunition bearing Hebrew lettering were seized.

Among the estimated four truck loads of weapons are 300 M-16 rifles, 20 RPG's, and 20 machine guns in addition to hand grenades, radio equipment, and bullet-proof jackets.

Another Army unit this morning stormed a second Lebanese Forces center in al-Nab'ah. Six 107-mm rockets were found on the center's lower floor.

Security sources pointed out that the continuing possession of weapons and ammunition caches and confessions by people arrested in connection with the Sayyidat al-Najat Church crime, saying they were instructed to gather information on the Lebanese Army centers in particular areas, again prove the bad intentions behind this conduct.

Elsewhere, naval targets were monitored off the Jubayl and Beirut coast today. This called for tightening security measures among the Lebanese Army forces along the Lebanese coast to prevent it from being used for illegal transportation.

Editorial Equates Lebanese Forces, Hizballah

NC2403174494 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 21 Mar 94 p 3

[Editorial by Chief Editor Hasan Sabra: "Lebanese Forces and Hizballah Are Two Sides of the Same Coin"]

[Text] We do not speak the truth for devious purposes, as the Lebanese Forces' information media organs and Commander Samir Ja'ja' claim. It is true that there should be no double standards in Lebanon, that all people are equal before the law, and that no one is above the law. We are being true to ourselves when we maintain that we support all the security measures taken by the Lebanese authorities to pursue the suspicious role played by the Lebanese Forces, primarily Ghidras [headquarters of Lebanese Forces Commander Samir Ja'ja']. The government is not only doing the right thing but is also dutybound to use its legal powers to arrest suspects, fugitives, and defendants in operations against state security.

It is true that the Lebanese Forces' information media unscrupulously threaten the homeland's unity, fan the fire, and castigate the state and its institutions. These media fail to blame the Zionist enemy, who strikes at the homeland, its unity, and its Christians and Muslims. As a matter of fact, when the media fails to adopt a responsible position they become irresponsible and, consequently, the government is not to blame for the way it deals with them. Despite their dangerous role against Lebanon and its unity, no one has tried to harm these media organs.

We support the security measures that the Lebanese legal authorities have taken to preserve security. The government is right when it says that security must cover all Lebanese territory.

Therefore, we speak the truth and mean it when we denounce the military parade staged by the Hizballah in Ba'labakk to mark the Jerusalem Day anniversary. We are against this encroachment on the state's rights in Ba'Labakk, which recurs every month in a desperate attempt to restore the atmosphere of the civil war, which all Lebanese reject. All the Lebanese people reject the civil war and those who seek to remind them of this war and even try to endear its destruction to certain people within their own ranks.

We are against this unilateral act that Hizballah performs in one Lebanese area after another in an attempt to show that it is above the law. We are against Hizballah's attempts to create a rift between the people and the state in certain areas, to challenge the state's prestige, and to drive out or subjugate its establishments.

We are against the timing that Hizballah chose to challenge the state, first when it insisted on staging the military parade in the streets of Ba'labakk at a time when Lebanese security forces were doing their duty in chasing and hunting down fugitives and wanted criminals on charges of bombings and encroachment on the state establishments. It is unreasonable to see Lebanese security forces doing their sacred national duty of protecting the homeland and citizens' security in one area of Lebanon while those in another area have to relinquish that same duty and are forced to leave their positions because a military force is organizing a military parade.

Since it is only natural for the security forces to arrest those who carry unlicensed arms and threaten security in Ghidras, it is unreasonable for groups to take to the streets in Ba'labakk by the hundreds and perhaps by the thousands, flouting the state's prestige, threatening national security and citizens, defying the people's feelings, provoking the formula of coexistence, and arousing hateful feelings that were buried once and for all with the end of the civil war and the advent of social peace.

As we support the security forces in hunting down fugitive criminals—who challenged the state's institutions, laws, and organs—and call for rewarding the security men who performed their duty while aware of the dangers confronting them, we also call for punishing those who relinquished their official posts in the security departments in Ba'labakk and agreed to be spectators of the military parade. Those who staged the military parade in Ba'labakk sought to negate any state presence in the city.

Yes, we will bear in mind the actions of Hizballah and others against the state and its military, political, informational, educational, and cultural establishments. Yes, we will not ignore its plan to bring down the government in favor of chaos where its logic might prevail so that it may control the homeland for reasons that have nothing to do with patriotism or Islam. We view the parade in Ba'labakk as part of this destructive plan under the banner of religion, Jerusalem, struggle, and a march.

We believe that Hizballah's timing gave the residents of Ghidras the opportunity to say something true for unholy purposes. We tell the truth for the sake of the truth and for selfless goals when we maintain that Hizballah is in harmony with the Lebanese Forces in its constant endeavor to remain outside the state. Both have

a common interest in antagonizing the state. Perhaps every move either party makes against the state is used to serve the interests of the other party. Both parties have become two sides of the same coin, generating chaos and serving the interests of others at the expense of Lebanon, namely, the state and its establishments.

We do not believe that the state is worthy of survival if it fails to abide by its own logic that was manifest in two cases: First when it did its duty in Ghidras and, second, when it hunted down those who challenged the state in Ba'labakk. This is the truth told for the sake of truth.

Judge Threatens Action Against Newspapers

NC2303095094 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] Magistrate Munif 'Uwaydat, the Appeal Court's public prosecutor, has affirmed that media reports on the bombing of Sayyidat al-Najat Church in Zuq Mikha'il do not originate from judicial authorities and their auxiliary security agencies. He said measures will be taken against anyone who publishes false reports to harm security and mislead the investigation.

Magistrate 'Uwaydat said he will sue the AL-KHALIJ AL-'ARABI newspaper because it published a false report after identifying the individuals who fabricated such news that harms the country and the revered clergymen's reputation. He added that the paper's editions will be confiscated and measures will be taken to ban the entry of such newspapers into Lebanon.

Magistrate Sentences 6 to Death for Bombing

NC2403144794 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Examining Magistrate Fawzi Daghir, who is investigating the bombing of Sayyidat Dayr al-Balamand, today passed the death sentence against the six detained criminals. He dropped charges against defendant 'Abdallah al-Hilu, who is now dead.

Judge Daghir instructed the security service to arrest the real motivators. He dropped charges against two defendants because of a lack of evidence.

Judge Sa'id Mirza demanded that the death sentence be passed against 16 people—three detained and 13 fugitive—on charges of killing Jordanian diplomat Na'ib al-Ma'ayitah in January.

Phalangist Leader Reacts to Government Measures

JN2503115894 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0615 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Interview with George Sa'adah, leader of the Lebanese Phalangist Party, by Radio Monte Carlo reporter Antoine Kustantin in Beirut; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Sa'adah] In view of what is currently happening on the ground, which has created the fears we have spoken about, we announced yesterday through the Voice of Lebanon radio station that we abide by these decisions. However, we understand that they are extraordinary measures which will last for a short period of time until the new law on organizing the media has been implemented as part of the national reconciliation document.

[Kustantin] Don't you fear that this [words indistinct] will take a long time?

[Sa'adah] That is what we fear and is why we have many questions. If the intent is to sacrifice liberties for a short period of time for the sake of providing people's safety and for stability in Lebanon, then this is acceptable. But if the intent is to gag people, especially opposition radios, so the rulers will get some relief, this is something else. Therefore, we will contact senior officials to speed up measures to pass the new media law and end measures to prevent radio stations and other media from carrying out their duties.

[Kustantin] Concerning stopping the private media from broadcasting news, does this decision have any legal or political justifications? Are you convinced about the justifications?

[Sa'adah] If the justifications are for a short period of time, it is possible to control news related to the movements of the army and security forces and the investigation. Although the Voice of Lebanon, which belongs to the Phalagist Party, was licensed as a news station long ago, we submit to the Council of Ministers' decision if such a decision leads to providing relief for the Lebanese public. But this public will not rest if liberties disappear. This is what we will watch in the coming days. We will not remain silent about any repression of liberties.

[Kustantin] Concerning the Christian issue, reports say that the Phalangist Party was relieved by the decision to dissolve the Lebanese Forces Party, as it gives it a free hand to become the sole representative of the Christians. Certain papers also write about the possibility of your acting within the law to regain property over which you are in dispute with the Lebanese Forces. How true are these reports?

[Sa'adah] Concerning legal actions, some law suits were lodged long ago. Other suits have been prepared despite the new developments. As for us being relieved by these measures and now having a free hand, we have always called for party multiplicity and for a political, principled, and ideological competition. We are not relieved merely because the Lebanese Forces Party has been dissolved. We are relieved because the series of explosions have been halted. If the state and the security organs had not taken the measures they took, the series of explosions would have expanded, spreading the terror we have seen recently.

Hizballah Opposes Ban on News Broadcasts

LD2503103994 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Text] The Lebanon's Hizballah revolutionary movement expressed concern over a recent decision taken by that country's government to ban the broadcast of news and political programs by a number of private radio and television transmitters throughout Lebanon.

On the basis of a Central News Unit report from Beirut, a statement issued by Hizballah today states: The decision of the Lebanese Government contradicts the most basic social rights and freedom of speech. In respect of the critical situation that Lebanon is facing—due to the Zionist regime's aggressions—it is essential to safeguard national achievements, particularly the freedom of speech and the press.

In another part of the statement, Hizballah supports the government of Lebanon's decision to dissolve the Lebanese Forces Party [LFP] which is accused of involvement in recent bombings.

Al-Hariri on Implementing Security Measures

NC2403123194 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Statement by Lieutenant Colonel Fadl Dahir, secretary of the Internal Security Council, at his residence in Quraytim on 24 Mar—recorded]

[Text] The prime minister chaired at his home in Quraytim at 1100 today, 24 Mar 1994, a security meeting that included the ministers of defense, interior, and information. The meeting was also attended by Judge Joseph Furayhah, the legal investigator into the Sayyidat al-Najat Church crime, as well as members of the Central Internal Security Council; Attorney General Judge Munif 'Uwaydat; Beirut Governor Nayif Ma'luf; Major General Rafiq al- Hasan, director general of the Internal Security Directorate; Raymond Rufa'il, director general of the Public Security Department; Major General Nabil Farhat, director general of the State Security Department; Brigadier General Ibrahim 'Abbas, representing the Army command; and Lieutenant Colonel Fadl Dahir, secretary of the Central Internal Security Council.

After consultations regarding the situation, the necessary executive steps were taken to implement the resolutions passed by the Cabinet on 23 Mar 1994. Orders were issued to all security bodies to be strict in applying the law and persistent in taking all necessary measures that manifest the state's determination to impose the authority of the law on all parties without exception, bolster stability, and strengthen the construction and security march.

Al-Hirawi Speech Marks Date of Israeli Occupation

NC2503084594 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0720 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Speech delivered by Information Minister Michel Samahah, marking the 16th anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the south, held in the Law and Political Science College Hall in Beirut—live]

[Excerpts] O delegates, we address your promising conference, its research, and recommendations with every confidence that the cultural struggle for liberation completes the national struggle and martyrdom in defense of national dignity and our sacred right to sovereignty and independence. [passage omitted]

The liberation of our precious territories in the south and western al-Biqa' concerns us all. It is the responsibility of the state, which leads all its people, so that we can attain our objective together, with the minimum cost. National accord is the first step toward strengthening immunity in the face of dangers and the occupation. This occupation continued when the state was eclipsed. The state and its stability are a principal factor in retrieving our right. Any attempt to deal a blow to the state means collaboration with the enemy. Do whatever it takes to strengthen the state.

One-upmanship is like retreat. Both work against the homeland and the duty of liberation. We are facing contemporary facts that should be well understood, acted upon, and dealt with wisely for the sake of the homeland's victory. This stage demands that reason prevail. Your homeland is rich with reason and qualifications. It is the age of the responsible decision. Know that we are now shaping our fate for years to come.

O delegates, the homeland rises with action, not with emotions. Help to stop your enemy's objective of pushing us into the trap of emotional behavior. Stoking up crises does not alleviate the consequences. Solidarity in solving these crises strengthens the steadfastness.

Our principles are constant: no giving up on the right to retrieve our occupied territories in the south and western al-Biqa' and no bargaining or appeasement over consolidating our national sovereignty up to the internationally recognized border. The way to do this is to implement the UN resolutions, primarily Resolution 425. Lebanon has committed itself to solidarity with the brothers, especially Syria. It has committed itself to seeking the just and comprehensive peace.

We have declared that we seek the just and comprehensive peace. But Israel has not refrained from committing aggression against our people there daily.

O delegates, you know that our domestic unity is the strongest shield, especially now when things are turbulent with change. We must all stand united to prove that Israel, by trying to split our ranks, cannot wrest that which it failed to wrest at the negotiating table.

The state knows nothing of all this and has confirmed its ability to confront any treachery or aggression that attempts to undermine our internal stability. We have repeatedly announced that security is on a par with freedom and that national unity precedes politics and its games. [passage omitted]

How can we remain silent over the humiliation inflicted on our sons detained in Israeli prisons or in al-Khiyam inside the Lebanese border? How can we accept the daily repressive practices against our kinsmen and their right to safety, dignity, and a prosperous life over their land and inside their homeland? [passage omitted]

Al-Hariri Leaves for Private Visit to France

NC2403182194 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left Beirut for Paris on board his private plane at 1900 today to begin a private visit to France. Sources have said that al-Hariri will hold contacts on the sidelines of the visit with some French officials, primarily the French prime minister, on the regional situation.

Al-Asad Greets Yemeni President Upon Arrival

Salih Comments

JN2403164294 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Excerpts] Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih arrived in Damascus at 1230 today.

President Hafiz al-Asad led those who received President Salih on the tarmac. [passage omitted] The two presidents held a meeting at Tishrin Palace attended by the official Yemeni delegation, Vice Presidents 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Prime minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi. [passage omitted]

Upon arrival in Damascus, President Salih made a statement to the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, in which he said: I am glad to visit sisterly Syria to meet with my brother President Hafiz al-Asad and to discuss with him all issues that concern our two fraternal countries and our Arab nation at the present stage. For us, the visit will be an opportunity to acquaint brother President Hafiz al-Asad with developments and the situation in our country and efforts to overcome the political crisis and implement the accord document, signed in Amman, in order to maintain unity and build the modern Yemeni state. We in the Republic of Yemen cannot do without the role of the brothers in Syria, led by brother President Hafiz al-Asad. They have always been with us. They have always embodied the sincerity of the pan-Arab position toward their brothers in Yemen and have been eager to maintain Yemeni unity, which is a pan-Arab gain before being a Yemeni gain. Preserving this unity is an Arab responsibility, because it is an important factor for consolidating security, stability, and peace in the region. It is also an advanced step toward realizing the pan-Arab unionist objective that strengthens Arab power and meets Arab aspirations for progress.

Undoubtedly, our talks will deal with developments in the Arab arena and issues that concern our Arab nation, foremost of which are developments in the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

We reiterate our country's position that supports the efforts, led by steadfast Syria, to realize a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the restoration of Arab rights, foremost of which is the Palestinian Arab people's right to return to their land and set up their independent state on their national soil, and Israel's withdrawal from occupied Arab territory in the Golan and south Lebanon.

Al-Asad, Salih Discuss Issues

JN2403210794 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] The brothers President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the [Yemeni] Presidential Council, and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad held a closed meeting at the People's Palace in Damascus this evening.

The Yemeni News Agency, SABA' has learned that the talks addressed the strong fraternal bilateral ties, the means of promoting them, issues of common interest to the two fraternal countries, and Arab issues.

The brother Presidential Council chairman briefed his brother His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad on developments in our country in light of the accord document and the efforts made to contain the crisis and ensure the convening of meetings by the Constitutional institutions to help implement the accord document.

The session of Yemeni-Syrian talks was held at the People's Palace at 1730, Damascus time, today. The talks were cochaired by brothers Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council, and His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad of the Syrian Arab Republic.

During this session of talks, the two leaders reviewed current Arab developments and issues of interest to our Arab nation, foremost among which are developments in the Palestine question and the efforts under way to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of regaining Arab rights.

The two leaders stressed the need to promote efforts to clear the Arab atmosphere and restore Arab solidarity so Arabs can cope with the enormous challenges facing our Arab nation, and so just, comprehensive, and durable peace can be achieved in the region. Issues pertaining to the fraternal bilateral ties were also addressed.

His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad of the Syrian Arab Republic has reiterated Syria's support for our people, and for our country's stability. He also emphasized that Syria supports all efforts to safeguard Yemeni unity and enhance its march, given that Yemeni unity is a significant pan-Arab accomplishment along the path of Arab unity, and a gain that is dear to all Arabs. He asserted that Yemen's security, stability, and safety concern Syria and all the sons of the Arab nation, given that the pan-Arab security is an indivisible whole.

For his part, the brother president expressed his appreciation of the fraternal efforts and stands of the fraternal Syrians, as manifested in their support for the march of unity and democracy in our country. He indicated that the Yemeni-Syrian ties are fraternal and strong.

At the outset of this session of talks, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad welcomed the brother Presidential Council chairman and the delegation accompanying him on this visit. He noted the strong and deep fraternal ties binding the two fraternal peoples. He expressed his confidence that this visit will reinforce these strong ties in the interest of the two fraternal peoples and the Arab nation.

This session of talks was attended for Yemen by Deputy Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Anisi, Minister of

Planning and Development Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Foreign Affairs Minister Muhammad Salim Basindwah, Presidential Council Office Chief 'Ali Muhammad al-Anisi, and Yemeni Ambassador to Syria Muhammad Shutfah. For Syria, the talks were attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nasir Qaddur.

Salih Ends Visit, Departs

JN2503073594 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 25 Mar 94

[Excerpt] Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih left Damascus last night following a one-day visit to Syria during which he held talks with President Hafiz al-Asad. President Hafiz al-Asad led those seeing him off at the airport. [passage omitted]

Israeli Link To Massacre Said 'Confirmed'

JN2403122694 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 24 Mar 94

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Israeli Terrorism and the Peace Process," AL-BA'TH says: It has been officially confirmed that the Tel Aviv government and the occupation army are directly linked to the Hebron massacre. Consequently, the major world powers should have played the expected role in the face of the mass murder operations carried out by the occupation troops and the settlers, who are backed by the Tel Aviv government.

The paper adds: We expected decisive and serious measures to put an end to the policy of murder, terrorism, and forced expulsion that Israel is practicing against our people in the occupied territories.

The paper blames the world's big powers for not taking serious measures against the Israelis, who have continued to commit more massacres and terrorist acts.

The paper stresses that in order to see a successful end to the peace process and the achievment of its desired objectives, an end must be put to the Israeli disdain for international legitimacy and its resolutions. These resolutions should also be implemented, particularly those relating to the complete and comprehensive withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

The paper stresses that peace will remain distant from the region as long as Arab territory remains occupied.

The paper concludes by saying: The facts of the conflict in the region should be dealt with in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy. Only in this way can peace be established and the region escape the state of tension that it has been living with for half a century.

Commentary Examines Israeli Actions in Peace Process

JN2103172994 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1234 GMT 21 Mar 94

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Political observers throughout the world agree unanimously that Israel has, throughout the years of the Arab-Israeli conflict, wasted several opportunities for a lasting and entrenched peace in the Middle East. These observers also agree unanimously that of all the international initiatives to end this conflict that has been raging for more than half a century, the U.S. initiative is the most serious. Despite this, Israel has not met its responsibilities to the peace issue. It has remained captive to its expansionist ambitions, hostile ideology, and greed for occupying land. It wasted two full years of the Washington talks in futile arguments on its security fears, and escalated acts of repression in the occupied Arab territories. It committed the brutal aggression against southern Lebanon on the pretext of these security claims, until it was exposed to the whole world by the holy al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, where the Zionist settlers killed worshipers in God's house, and the Israeli Army completed the brutal massacre by killing other Palestinians who were leaving the mosque.

Inasmuch as the international community denounced the heinous massacre, it exerted efforts to save the peace process from an inevitable collapse. UN Security Council Resolution No. 904, although late, has come to contribute to the efforts aimed at resuming the Washington talks and at emerging with tangible results. Syria has responded to the various international endeavors out of its belief that the peace cosponsors are now aware of, more than at any time in the past, the seriousness of the Israeli maneuvering, and of the need for the actual implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions. Peace prospects have narrowed as a result of the Israeli rulers' procrastination and prevarications, and of giving predominance to unimportant things over essential and substantive issues. Although the UN Security Council has provided another opportunity to resume the peace process, Israel's wasting of this opportunity, just as past opportunities, could deal a fatal blow to the U.S. initiative, after which its revival would be difficult.

Undoubtedly, Israel's actions in southern Lebanon and the occupied Arab territories, in addition to its procrastination and prevarications, threaten the peace process. Israel's rulers violate human rights, the Geneva conventions, and the UN principles on a daily basis. Israel has been occupying the Arab territories since 1967, confiscating the possessions of the Arab citizens, establishing settlements, and dealing with the Palestinian people very brutally. It does not hesitate to kill children and women. It also confronts the Lebanese people's struggle to liberate their land with raids, shelling, and bombardment from land, air, and sea. Had Israel been concerned about achieving peace, as its rulers claim, It would have managed to render the Washington

talks a success, and announced its readiness to fully withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, to implement the UN Security Council resolutions, and achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. What draws one attention is that the Israeli rulers have been shedding tears on the threatened peace since the Hebron massacre. They have not stop making calls to resume the talks. Have they eventually been convinced that the policy of maneuvering and intransigence, which they have been adopting since the convening of the Madrid conference, will not be able to affect the determination of Syria and the Arabs to restore their occupied territories in full, and that peace cannot be established through separate deals, but through the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions, as well as through full abidance by the essence and bases of the U.S. initiative; namely, the exchange of land for peace?

Only a few days ago, Yitzhaq Rabin admitted that there is not much time left, and that Israel must make decisions. However, as usual, he did not explain the nature of these decisions. We have no choice but to remind him that the decision awaited by the whole world, without which there will be no solution or peace in the Middle East, is the full Israeli withdrawal. The Arabs have done everything possible to render the peace process a success. Syria played a distinguished role in reactivating the peace process, a role recognized by the international community. Based on this, Israel alone will be responsible for wasting the new opportunity provided by the UN Security Council resolution, and by the international efforts that have been persistent since the Hebron massacre, if it continues with the policy of maneuvering and prevarication, and believes that it can continue to disdain the power of the UN Security Council and human mind.

Paper Reports on Tourism Figures, Facilities

JN2103112794 Damascus AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 6 Feb 94 p 3

[Excerpt] Damascus—AL-THAWRAH—Statistics from the Planning Directorate at the Ministry of Tourism have confirmed that the number of tourists who came to Syria in 1993 reached 1.91 million; an increase of 10 percent over 1992 when the number of tourists reached 1.74 million.

A spokesman for the directorate said the number of tourists this year is expected to exceed two million, judging by the current figures, which is considered a positive indicator of the development of Syrian tourism.

The spokesman added that facilities given to all visitors in the form of simplified entry and exit procedures and greater latitude in bringing in and taking out currencies, have played a major role in increasing the number of tourists, especially Arab tourists whose number reached 1.42 million. Arab tourists are given the same treatment as Syrians since they do not require entry visas, as in the case of foreign nationals, and they also enjoy the right of residence and ownership.

The spokesman added that proper preparations for the tourist season have also had a great effect. The Ministry of Tourism, in cooperation with the competent quarters, has made up for all shortages and has met the needs of tourists and visitors of all nationalities. The number of beds in Syrian hotels now exceeds 30,000. This is in addition to 8,000 beds in summer camps catering to internal tourism, and 20,000 beds in villas and furnished apartments.

The spokesman said that, due to its richness in beauty and history, Syria has become a great tourist resort and a vast museum visited by people from all over the world. There has also been progress in all aspects of life. In addition to the improvement in the hotel industry, Syria has been active in other fields as well. Its 24,000-km road network includes 783 km of highway and 2,000 km of modern railroad. Its airports and seaports are provided with tourist lounges. This is in addition to a large fleet of tourist transport buses. Law No. 10 of 1991 has encouraged many financiers to establish new tourist transport companies. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan

Hekmatyar's Forces Attack Kabul 23 Mar

LD2403201194 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] The infamous militia of Golboddin-Dostam last night mounted a failed offensive on the positions of the Islamic army's forces in the easterly direction. A security source told the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY [BIA] military correspondent that the offensive of the militia was aborted in the very first hours of the attack, and damage was inflicted on rebellious militia, which suffered a great loss of life. Following their defeat last night, the militia subjected residential areas of city of Kabul to rocket attacks last night and this morning. It caused no loss of life, but some damage was inflicted on the residents of Kabul. According to another report, yesterday afternoon a heavy clash took place between the militias of Golboddin and Dostam in the area of Brishnakot in Kabul. The conflagration continued until 2200 last night, and much loss of life was suffered by the warring militias. The security source added differences between the commanders of Golboddin's party and commanders of Dostam were increasing. Since the start of the unholy alliance between Golboddin and Dostam, this was the umpteenth clash between these two militia groups.

Government Reportedly Enters Pol-e Khomri

94P50113A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Mar 94 p 4

[Text] Jeddah—Afghan presidency sources have reported that government forces day before yesterday entered the heart of Pol-e Khomri, the capital of Baghlan Province, while the front line of the fighting is centered in the vicinity of the grain silos in the southern part of the city, called "little Moscow" in the Communist era. Groups of the Ismaili and Uzbek militias, and other Communist opposition groups, are concentrated there now.

In a telephone contact with AL-HAYAH in Jeddah, the Afghan sources made little of the attacks that the Uzbek militias, under the command of General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, are launching against the capital, Kabul, and described them as "desparate." They indicated that the government forces had three days ago taken large amounts of booty in the form of weapons, ammunition, and tremendous quantities of fuel and provisions. They said that the Communist militias had been preparing their men and large quantities of arms, ammunition, and supplies for an attack on northern Kabul from the Pol-e Khomri region. They described the amount of booty which the government forces had captured as "inconceivable, praise God."

Bangladesh

Article Views 'New Political Alliance' in Region

BK2403120494 Dhaka DAINIK INQILAB in Bengali 17 Mar 94 p 1

[Text] Pakistan was compelled to withdraw its resolution on Kashmir at the UN Human Rights Commission—a very unexpected incident. The withdrawal clearly showed that the process of forging a new political alliance in the region has begun. As little as 12 hours before the withdrawal, international news agencies did not give any hint that the resolution would be taken back. Rather, the news agencies reported that the Kashmir resolution might be passed. In the resolution, Pakistan condemned human rights violations in Kashmir and called for sending a UN Human Rights Commission fact-finding mission to the state. Pakistan considered this resolution very important. Prime Minister Bhutto sought the support of each of the member countries, but she failed even to win the support of the Muslim countries. Pakistan was asked by China and 10 Muslim countries—including Iran—to withdraw the resolution. Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali said it was very difficult for his country to refuse a request made by China and Iran. Only Saudi Arabia and Bosnia-Herzegovina supported Pakistan's resolution. Bangladesh remained aloof, saying it would abstain from voting on the resolution. It did not side with the 10 Muslim countries led by Iran or with Pakistan. It should be mentioned that neither Saudi Arabia nor Bosnia have any voting rights in the 52-member UN Human Rights Commission, but they have a large number of supporters.

Bangladesh's stand on this issue is not transparent. For a long time, Bangladesh has been raising its voice against human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir. It has always supported UN resolutions on Kashmir, but it did not support this Pakistani-sponsored resolution.

Diplomatic sources told this correspondent that Bangladesh does not have any strategy of its own. Its foreign policy has no specific goals. It is difficult to say whether there is any logic behind the nonaligned foreign policy currently being pursued by Bangladesh following the end of the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union. It should be mentioned that Bangladesh does not want to support either India or Pakistan on this issue. India has described Pakistan's resolution as interference in its internal affairs. The resolution proposed that a delegation from the International Red Cross Society or any reliable representative of the UN Human Rights Commission be sent to Kashmir. Before the withdrawal of the resolution, India allowed a group of diplomats from Muslim countries to visit Kashmir, and officials briefed them on the situation in the state. During the visit, the Kashmiri people observed a strike and held protest demonstrations. The diplomats observed these events from bulletproof cars.

Foreign diplomats based in Dhaka have said that this the visit India arranged for the Muslim envoys was aimed at

countering Pakistan's diplomacy on Kashmir. India achieved tremendous success in this regard, as the 10 Muslim countries led by Iran agreed to ask Pakistan to withdraw its resolution. Thus, India was able to win a diplomatic victory over Pakistan. This was possible because of the Muslim countries. It must be concluded that India has strong ties with the Muslim countries.

It may be recalled that when Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Iran toward the end of 1993, Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani proposed that China, India, and Iran form an alliance. India did not reject this proposal, and China did not voice any opposition to it.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali gave an interview to THE TELEGRAPH during his visit to Bangladesh in which he said it is impossible for India or China to form such an alliance. He said that Iran made this proposal because of its anti-American stand.

The undeclared alliance among these three countries became clear with the withdrawal of the Pakistani-sponsored resolution on Kashmir at the UN Human Rights Commission. China's policy is that other countries should not have any say regarding the human rights situation in this region. The current Iranian policy is anti-American, while Indian policy is to overcome the present crisis by any means. India does not support Western interference in the country's human rights situation. It is therefore quite likely that these three countries may forge an alliance at any time. If this is done, the alliance will be very strong. In the near future, this alliance will also be able to influence Pakistani policy. China not only wants to compete with the United States by forming an Asia-Pacific Economic Council, it also wants to form a regional bloc. After pulling out of Vietnam and Cambodia, China tried to establish ties with the ASEAN countries. In view of its strained relations with ASEAN, China is now in search of new allies. For this reason, China is saying that the small countries in the region should form an independent bloc. It is not clear what stand small countries such as Bangladesh will take toward the new bloc China is considering proposing.

The nonaligned policy is gradually losing significance. A meeting of the nonaligned G-15 group scheduled for New Delhi last December was not held. The South American member countries did not attend the meeting. These countries—including Chile, Brazil, and Argentina—are eager to join the North American Free Trade Association [as published]. The other members of this nonaligned group—including Malaysia, Indonesia, and Zimbabwe—emphasize the importance of this grouping because they have anti-American stands. The pro-American members are unhappy about this.

Under the prevailing circumstances, the countries of this region feel it is necessary to form an alliance. Pakistan's resolution on Kashmir led to a diplomatic debacle for that country. China believes that Pakistan's resolution had the backing of the United States. Beijing is not willing to tolerate U.S. interference in the region. It is not clear what sort of understanding China would like between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. If China wants regional problems to be resolved on a regional basis, then we have nothing to say. If it wants to achieve its own objectives, however, the small countries should consider the matter. We have seen that India is unwilling to resolve problems bilaterally. Hence, any alliance between India and China would be a cause of concern for the small countries.

India

Foreign Secretary, U.S. Envoy Note Pressler Amendment

BK2403162794 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] India has opposed Washington's move for amendment or one-time waiver of the Pressler legislation banning military supplies to Pakistan.

The foreign secretary, Mr. K. Srinivasan, told the visiting U.S. assistant secretary of state, Ms. Robin Raphel, in New Delhi today that any addition to Pakistan's offensive military capabilities will escalate tension in the region and seriously affect India's security environment. The foreign secretary also voiced reservations on the U.S. proposal to discuss the nuclear nonproliferation issue within a small group of countries.

On India's relations with Pakistan, Mr. Srinivasan reaffirmed New Delhi's willingness to resume foreign secretary-level talks with Islamabad under the Simla Agreement. He hoped Pakistan will end its support to transborder terrorism. He drew her attention to the Indian parliament resolution on Kashmir and asserted that Pakistan's efforts to internationalize the issue will not succeed in fulfilling its territorial ambitions.

The American official expressed the hope that the prime minister would find it convenient to pay a visit to Washington at President Clinton's invitation. Mr. Raphel also called on the minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia. The minister outlined India's preference for a global, comprehensive, and nondiscriminatory approach to nuclear nonproliferation.

Referring to India's relations with the United States, he said development of still friendlier bilateral ties is a major priority in New Delhi's foreign policy. She also called on the commerce secretary.

Press Release Notes Details of U.S. Official's Visit

BK2403124094 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1047 GMT 24 Mar 94

["Press Release"]

[Text] The US assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs, Ms Robin Raphel, met Home Minister Snri S.B. Chavan at 1210 hrs. today. MOS (IS) [Minister of State for Internal Security] Shri Rajesh Pilot also participated in the discussions. Prior to the call on home minister, Assistant Secretary Raphel had a meeting with the home secretary and officials of MHA [Ministry of Home Affairs].

2. [number as received] The US assistant secretary stated that the primary objective of her visit to India was to clear up misunderstandings which had been created and shared the goal of improving Indo-US relations as expressed in home minister's recent statement.

3. The discussions were held in a frank and friendly atmosphere and were candid, practical, constructive, and fruitful. Issues of concern to both sides, including external support to terrorism in Punjab and J and K [Jammu and Kashmir], came up during the discussions. The home minister highlighted the fact that certain statements emanating from Washington impacted adversely on the ground situation in J and K. The US assistant secretary of state conveyed her government's appreciation for India's transparency in J and K and its permission to international human rights organisations and diplomats to visit Jammu and Kashmir. The assistant secretary stressed that United States would continue to urge Pakistan to cease aiding and abetting terrorism operating in India. Home minister stressed that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India and that the people of India would not tolerate attempts to undermine the nation's territorial integrity.

4. The US assistant secretary emphasized that Indo-Pak disagreements over J and K should be solved within the framework of the Simla agreement. Home minister highlighted India's renewed offer to Pakistan to schedule another round of foreign secretary level talks and dialogue at other levels to underline our objective of seeking improvement on all aspects of our relations with Pakistan.

[Dated] New Delhi

23 March, 1994.

Iran

Official Criticizes 'Unjust' Security Council Policies

LD2403134494 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] The head of the Iranian parliamentary delegation to the 91st conference of the Inter-parliamentary Union in Paris, Mr. Yahyavi, has strongly criticized the dual and unjust policy of the Security Council on the regional and international issues and crises.

According to our correspondent in Paris, he called for strengthening the original arrangements with the aim of preserving peace and security and reducing tensions.

The head of the Iranian parliamentary delegation to the 91st conference of the Inter-parliamentary Union held the big powers responsible for regional conflicts. He said: Just world bodies belonging to the nations are needed to prevent and stop these crises. Mr. Yahyavi said: This is the responsibility of the UN but, unfortunately, the decisionmaking Security Council and the Secretary General often act under the influence of the big powers.

He said: A clear example in this connection is the dual policy of the Security Council vis-a-vis the Bosnian issue and the prevention of the despatch of peacekeeping force from the Islamic countries on the hollow pretext that it will be siding with the Bosnian Muslims, and that too at a time when troops from other countries that have close ties with the Serbs have been despatched to Bosnia.

The head of the Iranian parliamentary delegation stressed that the different ways in which the Security Council has dealt with the Iraqi aggression against Islamic Iran and that country's aggression against Kuwait are the other examples of the Security Council's dual performance.

Mr. Yahyavi said: The Security Council's decisions should be made in an open climate and by being away from behind-the-door collusions.

Differences With Saudi Arabia Reiterated

NC2103120694 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 14 Mar 94 p 16

[Political commentary: "What Are the Deep Wounds of the Islamic Ummah?"]

[Text] King Fahd of Saudi Arabia disseminated a message in which he has expressed regret at the wounds of the Islamic ummah. He has also expressed concern about the hiatus in the so-called peace talks and hopes of peace!

What is worth pondering in this message is the allusion to the wounds on the body of the Islamic ummah, which have resulted in discord and rifts among the Muslims. It is important to see what these wounds are and who has inflicted them.

1. Unfortunately, one of the greatest problems of the Islamic world at present is that most of the rulers of the Islamic countries are affiliated with the dominant powers of the world. This situation is further aggravated when these servile rulers prefer to obey the great powers and honor them instead of following Islam and revering the views of the majority of their own people.

These subservient rulers have always obstructed any progress or action by the Muslims and one of the reasons for the people's backwardness is these rulers. This is especially conspicuous among the Arab countries, where they lack legitimacy and popularity and where the people

are even deprived of the right to elect their own officials. The Saudi regime is a perfect example of such a government.

2. Another wound that has been inflicted on the body of the Islamic ummah is from those who enjoy the privilege of administering the two holy mosques. Pilgramage is an Islamic issue and should not be allowed to become a victim to international politics. Unfortunately, the administrators of the two holy mosques implement policies that have been described by the great leader in his 'Id al-Fitr sermon yesterday as "obstructing" and "creating obstacles." These policies generate the impression in the minds of the Muslims that the pilgrimage also takes place in accordance with the whims and wishes of the United States and the great powers. The Saudi regime should not prevent the Muslims from participating in the grandest conclave of the Islamic world.

3. What is the justification for the Arab countries' efforts for peace with the Zionist regime, which is basically illegitimate, just when the uprising of the true owners of Palestine is assuming wider dimensions day by day?

It is extremely unpleasant for Muslims to observe that a group who claims to govern an Islamic country is seeking to give official recognition to the Israeli Government in the occupied Palestinian territories and when there is a pause in this process they become displeased.

4. Who has dictated the plot for reducing oil prices in order to disrupt the economies of the oil exporters? Why is it that the policy of oil production and export of the Islamic countries that have the largest recognized oil reserves in the Islamic world should be decided by the United States and other international powers?

5. Who are those who are suffering losses from a slump in oil prices and its thousand-percent decrease? Why is Saudi Arabia opposing the reduction of its oil production, which would result in a rise in oil prices?

As the Muslims of the world can see, the wounds of the Islamic ummah are not those mentioned by King Fahd but are those that have their roots in these affiliated regimes.

End to 'Disgraceful Equation' in Middle East Urged

NC2203075894 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 22 Mar 94

[Commentary prepared by the News Research and Commentaries Group]

[Text] Although no progress was achieved in the so-called Middle East peace talks last [Iranian calendar] year, [which ended on 20 March,] the commencement of direct talks with the Zionist regime paved the way for another pact. The signing of the Gaza-Jericho Self-Rule Accord between the PLO and the Zionist regime in September was the most important development in the Palestinian and Middle East crisis not only during the past year but during the five decades of Arab conflict with the Zionist regime.

The signing of this accord encouraged Washington to reactivate its Middle East diplomacy and a meeting was held between the Syrian president and his U.S. counterpart in Geneva in a bid to reach other compromises in other areas of the Middle East crisis. But the failure to implement the PLO-Tel Aviv accord destroyed the grounds for other accords and placed a question mark over the implementation of this accord as well.

Political analysts believe the most important reason for the failure of the 'Arafat-Zionist accord is that Israel's wishes alone have been fulfilled in this accord. Implementation of the major articles of the accord has been postponed, which means the PLO has granted Israel extensive privileges without reaping anything for itself. The implementation of one part of the accord, the withdrawal of the Israeli military forces from Gaza and Jericho, was foreseen a month ahead of the accord's signing but it did not take place at the set date. Still, Israel propounds various pretexts and is not ready to implement this part of the accord.

The most important outcome of the Gaza-Jericho Accord is the legitimization of the usurping presence of the Zionist regime. After gaining this big concession, Tel Aviv started its extensive blackmail of the Palestinians and the Arabs and every country, demanding that the Arabs end their economic sanctions and establish diplomatic relations with it. It also called on the Western countries to extend more economic aid to it in view of this compromise.

This accord, which was signed under pressure of the equation of the superiority of the Zionist regime and the United States, regionally and internationally, and quickly received international support, has faced numerous failures during the past few months because of the absence of the main elements that are needed for its continuation. Political analysts believe that the massacre of the worshipers in the Ibrahimi mosque has revealed the contradictory aspects of this accord. Its implementation is almost impossible without fundamental adjustments.

'Arafat's insistence on gathering up some Zionist settlements and disarming their residents, Israel's agreement to limit the activities of some extremist Zionist groups, and the dismantling of some Zionist settlements show that despite their varying views, the two signatories of the Gaza-Jericho Accord seek ways to save this accord from total failure.

The continuation of the intifadah after the signing of the Gaza-Jericho self-rule pact is considered one of the major elements leading to the failure of the accord because, although some time after the signing of the Oslo Agreement, 'Arafat ordered his forces in the occupied territories to set aside their fight against the Zionist

regime, the intifadah intensified. And although 'Arafat's forces were faithful to organizational commands at first, once they knew the details of the accord and saw the Zionist regime conitnuing its hostile attitude toward them, they joined the Muslim combatants.

Although the signing of the Gaza-Jericho Accord strongly polarized the combatant forces in the occupied territories, contrary to the expectations of the Zionist enemy, the outcome benefited the intifadah and gathered together the combatant forces under the banner of Islam. Remarks by a U.S. official that reaction by Muslim Egyptian society to the tragedy at the Ibrahimi mosque may lead to the overthrow of the Cairo regime reveals that the struggle against the Zionist regime, which is declining among the ranks of the Arab governments, is rising among nations and that if the joint struggle of the Muslim nations and societies is organized, the current disgraceful equation in the Middle East will cease to exist.

Pakistan

Bhutto Comments on Kashmir, Economic Issues

BK2203150094 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 22 Mar 94

[Text] Prime Minister Ms. Benazir Bhutto has said Pakistan being a peace-loving nation wants peace with its neighbors on the basis of honor and equality. Addressing a darbar [meeting] of the Punjab Regiment in Mardan today, the prime minister said we do not cherish aggressive designs against anyone. However, we cannot remain oblivious to our defense which will be strengthened within our limited resources. Our neighbors must not dream to establish hegemony because we can neither be provoked nor submit, she said, adding the people of Jammu and Kashmir must be given the right of self-determination and the Kashmir issue should be solved in a manner that it leads to laying a solid foundation for peace in the region. A neighboring country is dreaming to bring us under its hegemony, she said, adding we will not be cowed down by anybody.

Ms. Benazir Bhutto said the government is making every endeavor for the welfare of the people. The task is stupendous and the problems are many, which need cooperation from every segment of society. She said the prime objective before the political parties should be to ensure that the country is put on the road to progress and prosperity and its image enhanced in the community of nations. She, therefore, appealed to the people, including political leaders, ulema [religious scholars], and students to cooperate with the government in its efforts to solve socioeconomic problems.

The prime minister commended the Punjab Regiment for its glorious services and said the martyrs of the regiment have carved out a prominent place in the nation's history by having laid down their lives in the defense of the motherland. On this occasion, the prime minister announced a grant of 8 million rupees for various welfare projects being carried out by the regiment. Governor of Punjab retired Lieutenant General Mohammad Iqbal Khan, Governor of NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] retired Major Gen. Khurshid Ali Khan, Defense Minister Mr. Aftab Shaban Mirani, Chief of Army Staff Gen. Abdul Waheed, and other high civil and military officials were present on the occasion.

Earlier, the colonel commandant of the Punjab Regimental Center, Lt. Gen. Nasir Akhtar, and Commandant of the center Brigadier Qamar Zaman, in their speeches, gave a resume of the regiment's historic achievements and its role both in times of peace and war. The regiment founded in 1759 in Madras has the unique honor of winning of 440 military awards, including four Nishan-i-Haider. The colonel commandant presented the regiment's crest to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Abdul Waheed.

Foreign Office Says India 'Skirting' Kashmir Issue

BK2403131994 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 24 Mar 94

[Text] Indian reply to Pakistan's non-papers for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir and improvement of human rights situation is not positive, as New Delhi seems to be intent on skirting around on the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Briefing newsmen in Islamabad today, a Foreign Office spokesman recalled that Pakistan had given two non-papers to India on the 18th of January for a peaceful solution of Jammu and Kashmir issue and other problems. He said it appears from reply to these papers that India is going back from a meaningful and purposeful discussion on the Jammu and Kashmir issue as agreed upon between the two countries.

The spokesman said the Indian reply appears to be a propaganda exercise camouflaged in diplomatic language and the Indians have merely reiterated their old inflexible position on Jammu and Kashmir.

Foreign Minister Receives PRC Party Delegation

BK2203145094 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 22 Mar 94

[Text] A five-member delegation of the Chinese Communist Party held talks with the foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, in Islamabad today.

The member of CPC [Communist Party of China] Central Committee, Mr. Hou Zongbin, led the delegation. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali briefed the members of the delegation on the gross human rights violation being committed by Indian forces in Indian-held Kashmir. He emphasized the need for China to use its influence on India to give up her inflexible attitude and resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with UN resolutions.

Both sides expressed satisfaction over the current status of bilateral relation and stressed the need to further improve mutual cooperation in trade and economic fields.

Editorial Views Christopher's Remarks on South Asia

BK2203141694 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 21 Mar 94 p 3

[Editorial: "U.S. State Secretary's Statement—Need for Further Steps"]

[Text] Warren Christopher, the U.S. secretary of state, has categorically stated that one of the U.S. priorities is to have the nuclear capabilities of both India and Pakistan frozen. He said one important priority for us is to find a way in which the nuclear capabilities of both India and Pakistan can be frozen and conditions be created under which the nuclear threat to South Asia is reduced. Speaking at the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Appropriations, Warren Christopher disclosed that both India and Pakistan are at the threshold of acquiring nuclear facility and we are very concerned about that. One more issue that is raising its head, he added, is the capability of these two countries to deliver nuclear weapons to their targets and we are also paying due attention to it. Christopher's statement is the first policy statement from the highest level official of the Clinton administration, in which an evenhanded policy has been adopted toward the nuclear capabilities of both India and Pakistan, and which has caused due concern among the Indian community living in the United States. According to the daily NEWS, Christopher's statement has caused great resentment among the Indian community which understands that this new statement, which came close on the heels of the U.S. declaring Kashmir as a disputed territory, is the reflection of a shift in the U.S. attitude.

This is a matter of satisfaction that a most important official of the U.S. Administration has spoken about the nuclear programs of both India and Pakistan in a fair and equitable manner, but a mere expression of view by the United States cannot be considered adequate to meet the requirements of justice. James Moran, a member of the same subcommittee, asked Christopher: When you talk of adopting an evenhanded approach to the nuclear programs of both India and Pakistan, what is the justification for applying the Pressler Amendment only to Pakistan and not to India? The secretary of state pointed to his other engagements instead of replying to this question and sought leave of the committee. This reflects that Warren Christopher could not defend the continuation of a discriminatory legislation against Pakistan and it was not possible for him to prove whether there was any justification for the Pressler Amendment in view of Washington's desire to treat both India and Pakistan equally.

It is true that the signals given in recent weeks indicate that the U.S. Administration either intends to totally waive the application of the Pressler Amendment or wants to provide military aid, especially the F-16 aircraft, to Pakistan by finding some exceptional ways even while the Pressler Amendment remains effective. However, no practical way has thus far been found under which aid to Pakistan can be restored without harming its interests. This proves that the talk of equal treatment to both India and Pakistan is still in its initial stage and the actions of the U.S. Government do not confirm the veracity of its pronouncements. If the U.S. Government views both India and Pakistan equally in the context of their nuclear programs and intends to place them on equal footing, then it must abolish the discriminatory legislation like the Pressler Amendment or impose the same restrictions on India as are placed on Pakistan. If this is not done, then the claims about treating both India and Pakistan equally will appear only hollow and unreliable.

It is no secret that India had exploded a nuclear device some 20 years ago and possesses enormous resources for the advancement of its nuclear program. The United States had been keeping its eyes closed to India's nuclear program for the past 20 years. On one occasion, Washington rather directly assisted India in acquiring heavy water from France without raising any objection to it. The U.S. has also supplied computer technology to India, which also can be used for military purposes. In the presence of this policy, the U.S. claims about treating India and Pakistan equally cannot be accepted to be correct. Christopher's statement can be welcomed as a first step forward, but Washington needs to do much more to prove that its approach is fair. Pakistan has been declaring for the past 10 years that it is ready to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty provided India also did the same, but the U.S. failed to fully use its influence on India to persuade it to do so. It is hoped that the statement of the U.S. secretary of state will prove to be the first drop of rain for Pakistan and Washington will really be able to adopt a fair and equitable policy on South Asia and will stop pressuring Islamabad to unilaterally "cap" its nuclear program. No Pakistani Government can ever think of taking such a step under any greed or pressure, and this is a fact which the United States should never overlook.

Sri Lanka

State of Emergency Extended; Prime Minister Comments

BK2303125294 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 23 Mar 94

[Text] The motion to extend the state of emergency was passed in parliament by a majority of 82 votes yesterday. One hundred MP's voted for the bill, while 22 [as heard] voted against it.

Winding up the debate, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe said that the objective of the government is to conduct a free and fair provincial poll in the south. All candidates have been given full police protection, thereby ensuring the right of voters to exercise their franchise freely. The government is taking measures to strengthen democracy in the country. The prime minister thanked the voters and those who were instrumental in the successful conclusion of the local elections in the east and Vavuniya. He claimed that the result of the local elections in the east was the clear indication that terrorism had been eliminated. The prime minister said that the government has taken measures to develop these areas by strengthening the administration in the east.

Referring to the security forces' operations in the north and east, the prime minister said that they had achieved several victories against the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists. He claimed that the Tamils in the north and east and others were praising the activities of the security forces.

Article Examines Government Actions on Tamil Issue

BK1903090394 Colombo VIRAKESARI in Tamil 7 Mar 94 p 2

[Article by Arjuna]

[Text] All parties concerned admit that a peaceful solution should be found to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Several local and international organizations have expressed willingness to mediate in the issue. Even the two parties involved in the conflict have expressed their inclination for peace. Nevertheless, what are the factors that hinder these peace efforts from making any headway? Today, it is clear that the primary reason for this is lack of a clear-cut policy with the government in adopting suitable measures to resolve the ethnic conflict.

The ideas expressed by the president in general meetings on the ethnic conflict are totally contrary to those of the prime minister. Apart from this, the views expressed by the ministers also differ.in Three points stated by President D.B. Wijetunge recently on the minorities issue have drawn our attention. He says: There is nothing like ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, but it is only the menace of terrorism that exists in the country. Only the majority community people should rule the country forever and the minority should depend on them. There is no traditional territory for Tamils in Sri Lanka. The president's views on the ethnic conflict have been reflected in these statements.

At the same time, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe has adopted a different approach to the ethnic conflict. He projects himself as a person who believes in negotiations to find a solution to the conflict. It is ludicrous to note that his invitations to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] for talks carry different conditions on different occasions. Thus, besides differing from the views of the president, he contradicts his own statements.

Third, ministers have been expressing their own views, either in favor of or against those of the president and the prime minister. The official position of the government should be a combination of all these views, but one can come across only contradictions here. In other words, their views indicate that the government does not have any specific or authenticated stand on the ethnic issue. While taking steps to resolve the ethnic conflict, it is imperative to form a specific and coordinated view, at least at the ministerial level.

When the government does not have a specific and unified stand on the ethnic conflict, the Sinhalese politicians are offering various kinds of false propaganda on the minorities issue. This further aggravates the situation in resolving the issue. As the Sinhalese are given a wrong impression about the Tamils and their demands, it amplifies the feeling of animosity and creates a situation which makes it difficult to find a solution.

Given this situation, the government resorts to military action to suppress the legitimate aspirations of the minorities. All the military actions taken by the government in the past one and a half decades have ended in farce, only leading to the destruction of the property of the government and the people. However, these military actions could not destroy the legitimate aspirations of the people. Today's events indicate that these aspirations cannot be wiped out by mere military operations.

The Tamil community in the north has adapted itself to live amid any kind of threat. Normal activities are being carried out there despite heavy bombardment and shelling. People are used to living amid major economic embargo and transport barriers. In Kilaly, boat service is continuing despite air and missile attacks. All these things indicate that the Tamils are not going to submit to any kind of military pressure.

At the same time, the perpetual military pressure and the conflict have brought major changes to the social fabric of the Northern Tamils. Once Mahatma Gandhi said: The day when a woman is able to walk all alone in the streets at midnight can be regarded as the day of absolute freedom. A volunteer from a service organization who visited Jaffna recently has said that such a situation exists only in Jaffna. He has also pointed out that the crisis situation which existed before 1985 or from 1987-90 has changed, and that a peaceful atmosphere prevails there now.

All these things indicate that the struggle of the Tamil people has reached a stage where it is impossible to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people with inconsistent solutions. At the same time, this issue has gained international recognition. Human rights and refugee welfare organizations have also started showing interest in this issue. The government will have to face an embarrassing situation in dealing with the pressures

being exerted by them. Because, the norms like fundamental rights, human rights, and the right to self-determination have gained international acclaim. Acknowledging these norms will be quite unpleasant for the Sri Lankan Government. Therefore, the government would prefer to resolve the issue at home itself rather than taking it to the international level.

Today, everyone understands the need for holding talks with the LTTE to resolve the issue. The LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham has already stated that the organization is ready for unconditional talks with the government. Although the government side speaks of holding talks, this is only lip service. Ranil Wickremasinghe, who outlined various preconditions on different occasions, says that the response should come from Prabhakaran himself and that he should also participate in the talks. Anton Balasingham and Karikalan would not have given their personal views to the journalists and representatives of peace missions who visited Jaffna. They would not have said anything without the permission of Prabhakaran. Therefore, the condition insisting on Prabhakaran's direct participation does not seem to mean anything.

Asking a guerrilla organization to lay down its arms first and then come to the negotiating table is unprecedented. Past experiences also will not help create such a situation. For instance, even during the presence of the Indian peacekeeping force, the government started installing Sinhalese settlements in violation of the accord and delayed the establishment of interim government [as published]. Therefore, all Tamils feel that it will be suicidal to lay down arms while trusting the government, which is in the clutches of the Sinhalese racists.

Hence, the process of talks cannot be initiated all of a sudden. It can be initiated gradually and stage by stage. To achieve this, good diplomatic skill and political will to solve the problem is imperative. Those who possessed diplomatic skill and political will were only able to resolve major global issues. But, as far as Sri Lanka is concerned, is there anyone with such qualities?

First of all, the government should admit that there is ethnic conflict in the country. Second, the government should realize that this conflict needs a solution and that it should take appropriate steps to achieve this. Mere invitations for talks will not be the right initiative to find a solution. In the past, the government succeeded in hoodwinking Tamil leaders by holding several negotiations with them. Perhaps the reason for the government's hesitation to hold negotiations now may be that it cannot dupe the Tamil leadership any more.